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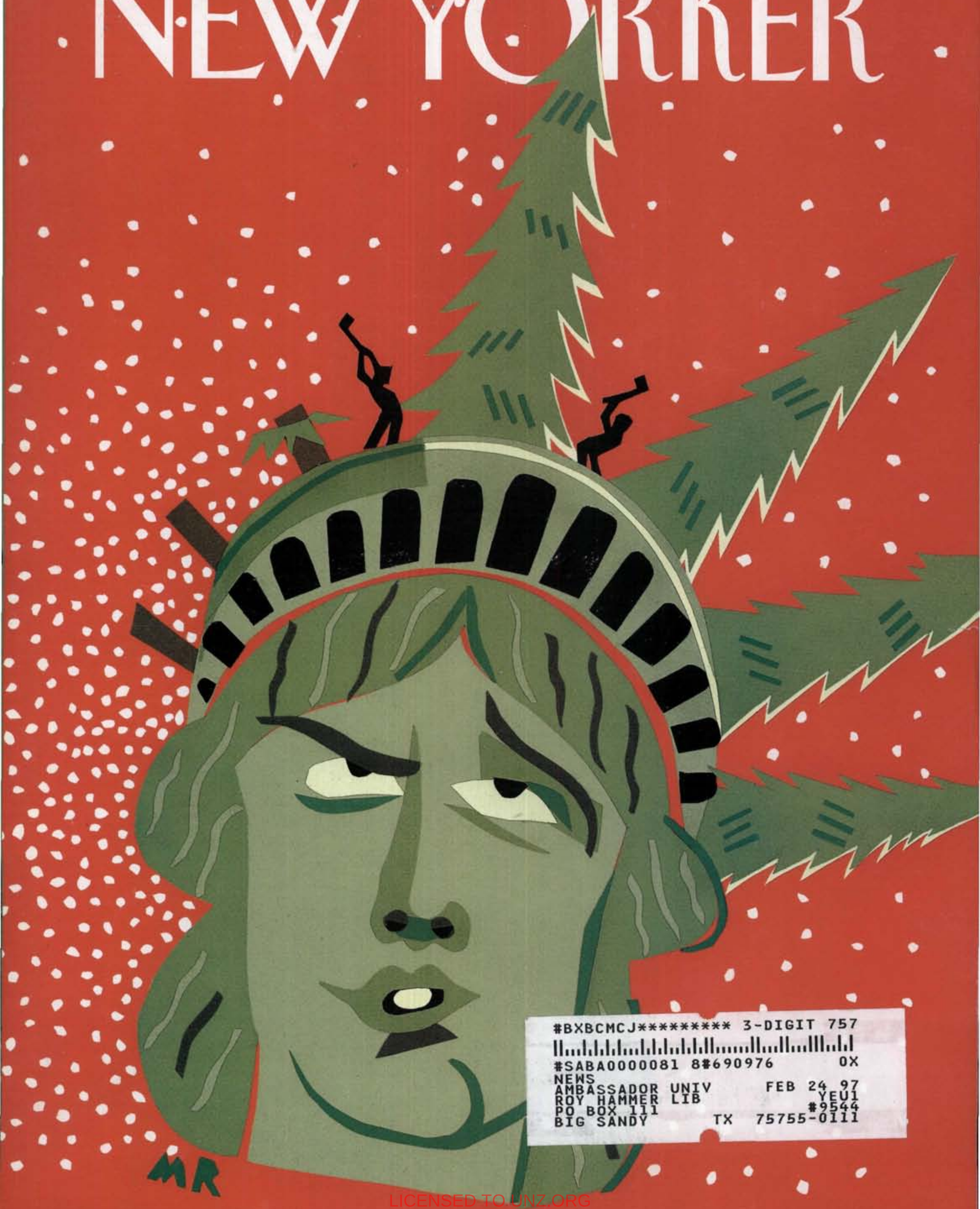

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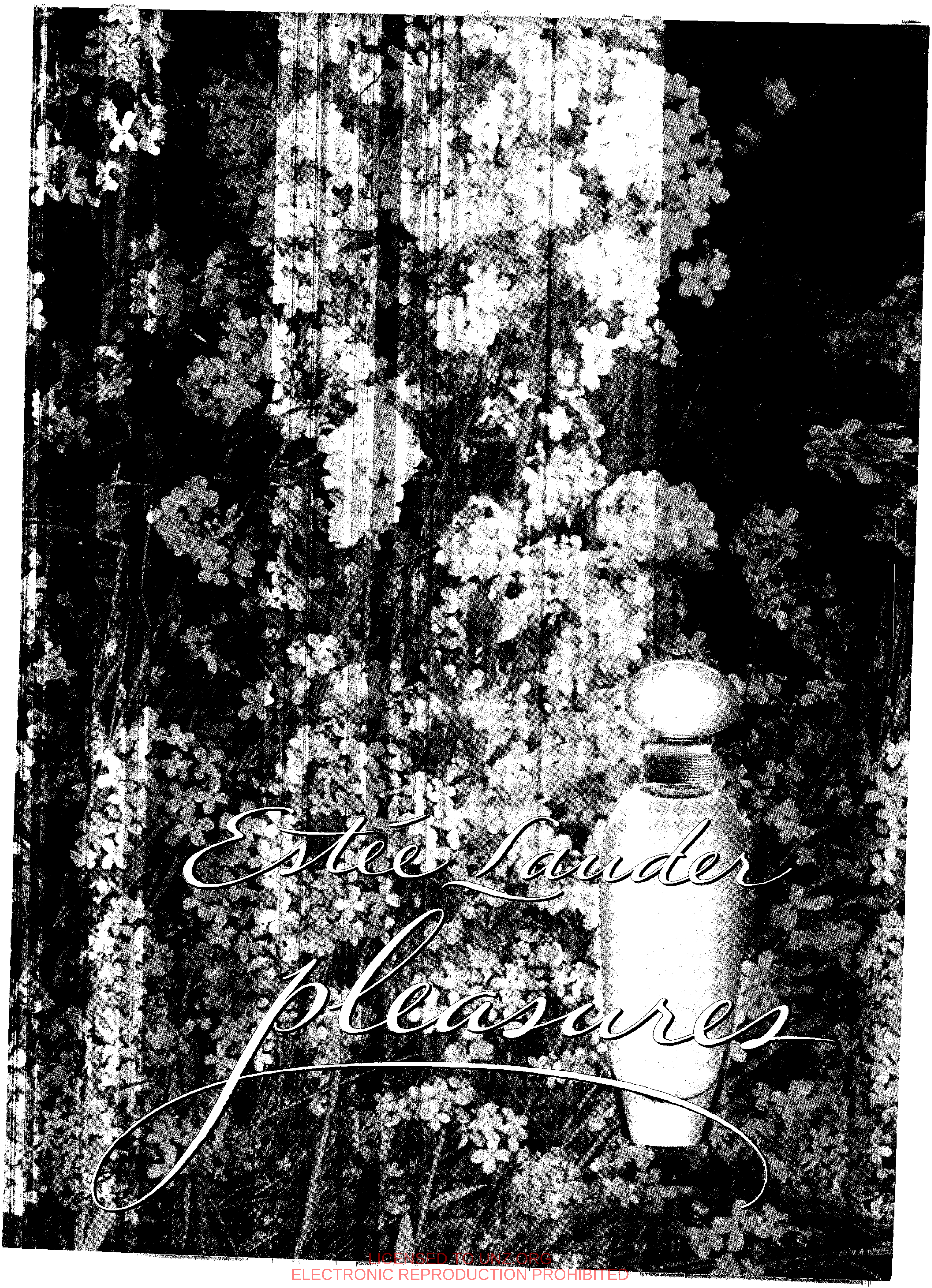
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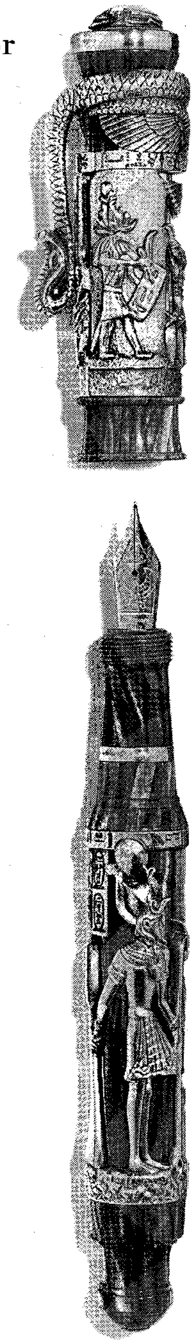

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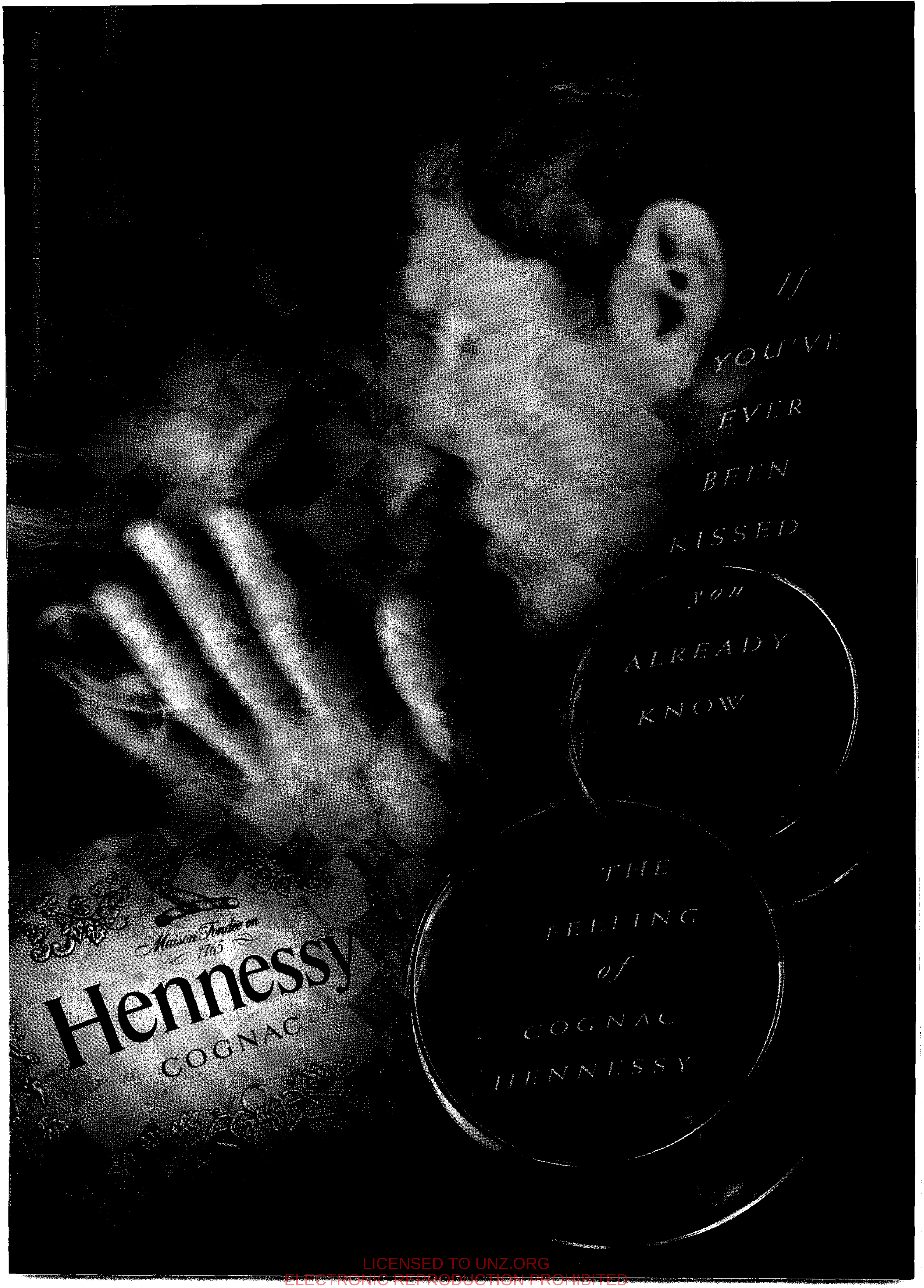
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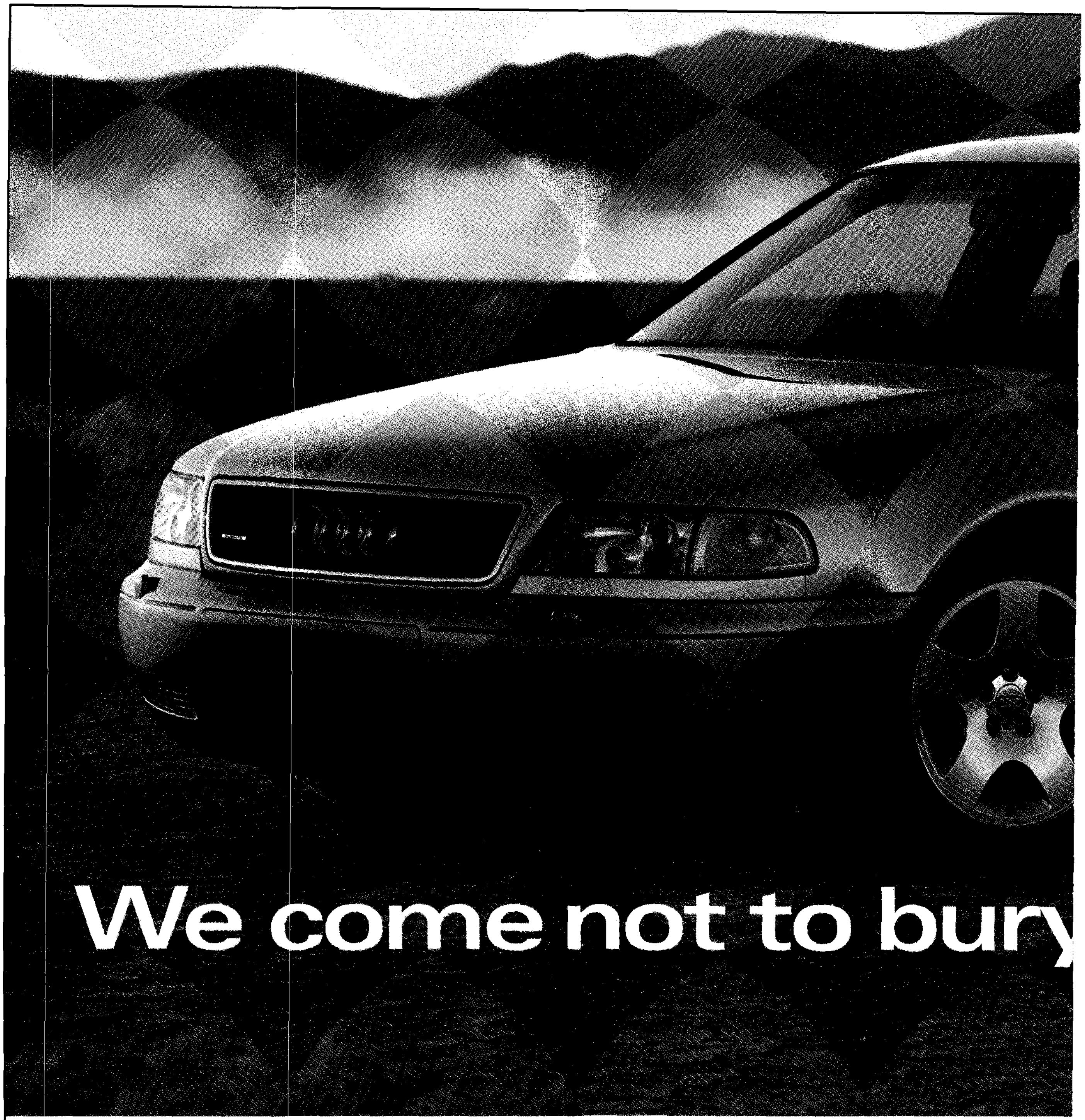

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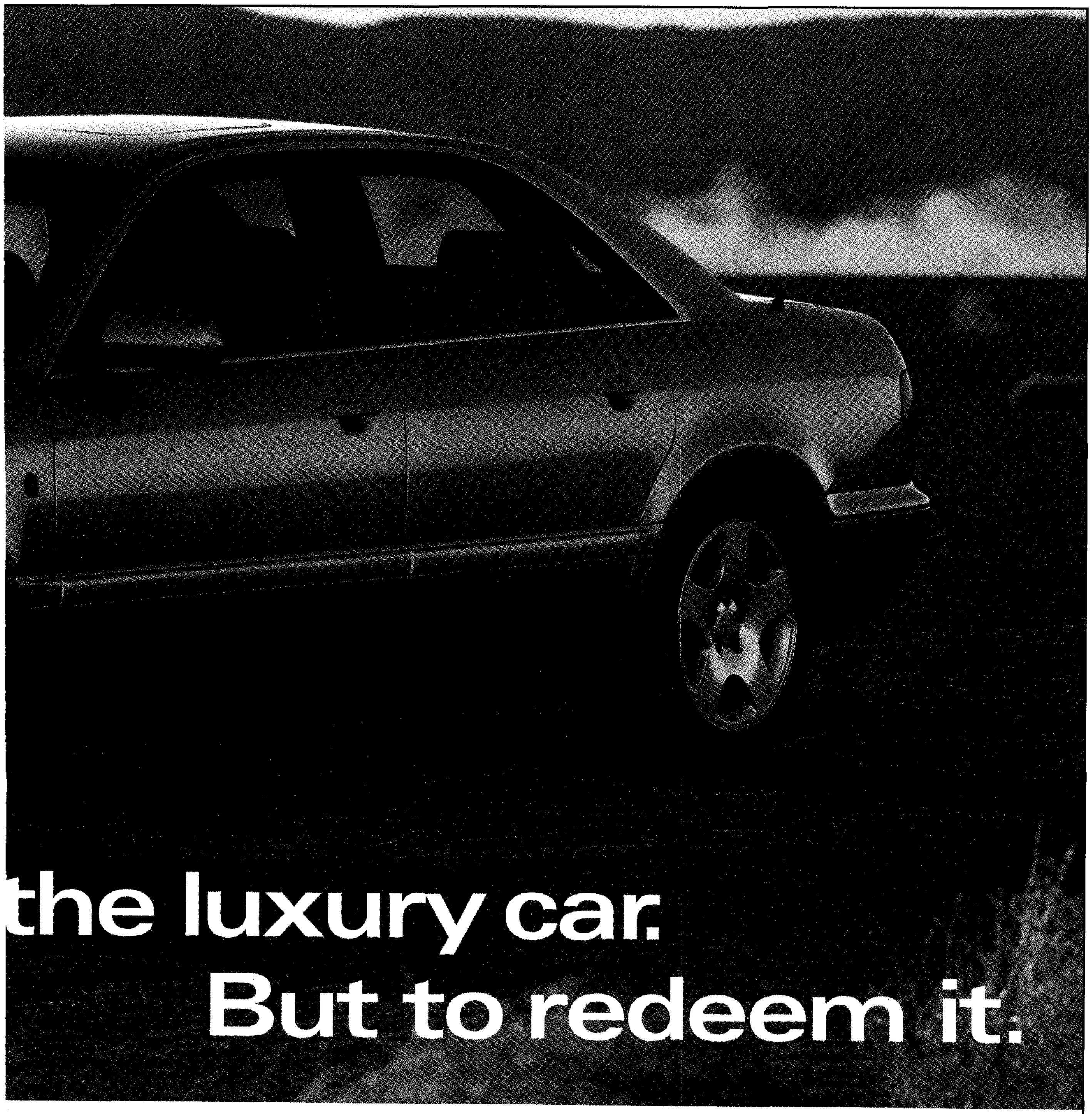

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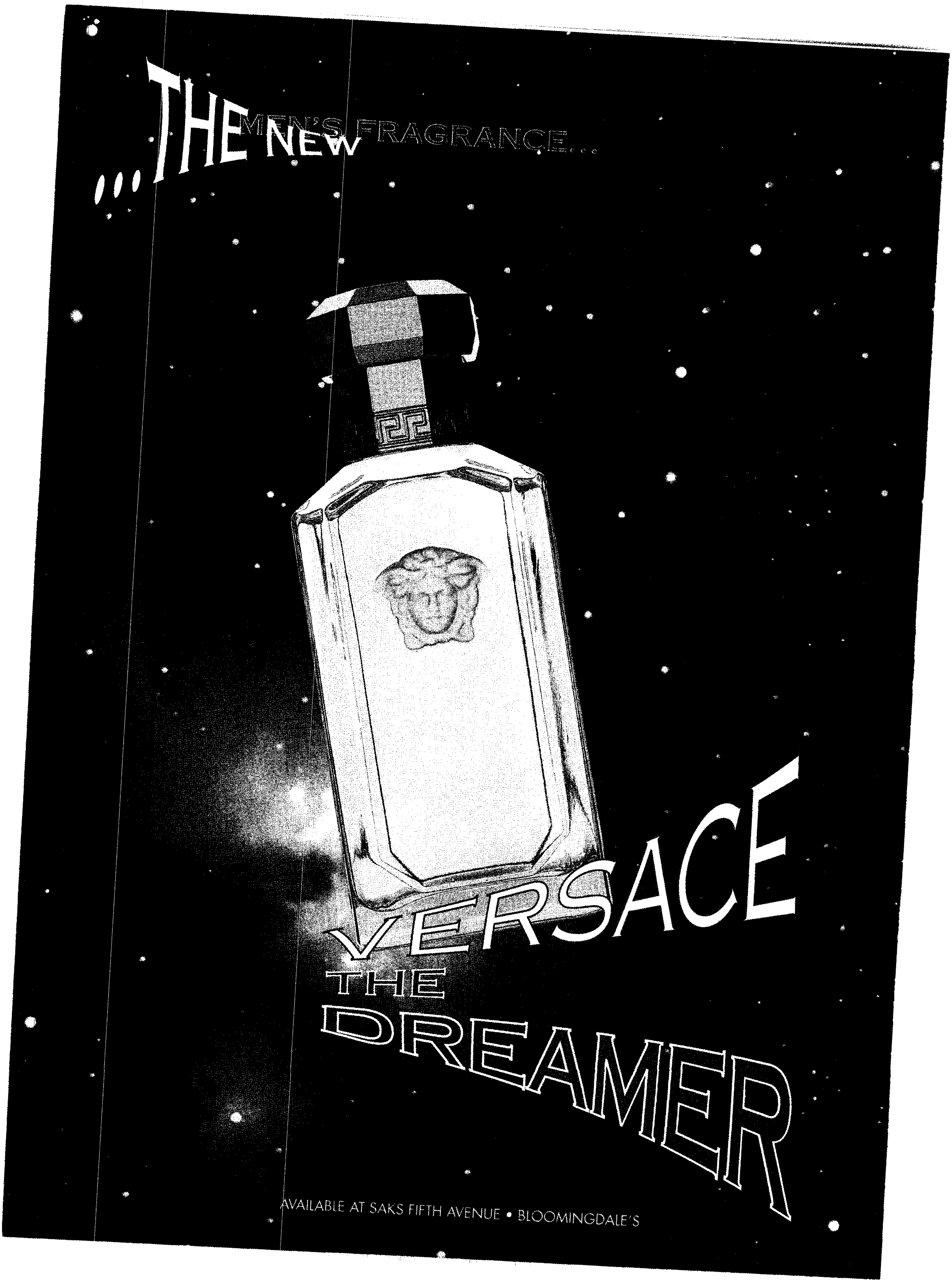
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COMMENT

HOOVER RIDES AGAIN

The false pieties of balancing the budget.

If you have read a newspaper or flicked on the television since November 5th, you will recognize the following refrain (indeed, you have probably heard it so many times that you find yourself repeating it in the shower): Balancing the federal budget is the nation's top priority. Support for this platitude is so pervasive that the 105th Congress seems likely to pass an amendment early next year to enshrine it in the Constitution. After picking up two Senate seats in last month's elections, the Republicans now reckon they have enough votes to overcome the President's opposition (which, in any case, has wavered recently) and to achieve the two-thirds majorities in both houses of Congress required to send a Constitutional amendment to the state legislatures for ratification.

If the balanced-budget amendment does pass, it will demonstrate conclusively that Herbert Hoover did not die in vain. The nation's thirty-first President was one of the century's most maligned figures, but his most cherished belief—that the key to prosperity lies in reducing government spending and eliminating the budget deficit—is now being parroted on talk shows and op-ed pages all across the country. Hoover wasn't a bad or a stupid man, but he made the mistake of believing the conventional wisdom of his day and trying to act upon it. "It would steady the country greatly if there could be prompt assurance . . . that the budget will be unquestionably balanced," he wrote in February, 1933, when the unemployment rate stood at twenty-five per cent and the roads west were full of itinerant farmers. Fortunately, the American people had ignored this glib reasoning and elected a far more pragmatic candidate, who professed loyalty to financial orthodoxy during the election campaign and discarded it once he was in office. F.D.R. didn't balance the federal budget once during his twelve years at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, but eventually most people didn't seem to mind, and for good reason. The budget deficit is simply an accounting number, and to treat it as something more than that—as a measure of the country's well-being or moral worth—is an error. Moreover, trying to balance the budget during an economic downturn, à la Hoover, is an excellent way to turn a recession into a depression.

The most reliable measures of a nation's welfare are the level and the growth rates of income per person which its economy produces, but these bear no simple relation to the size of the government's deficit. The economy grew

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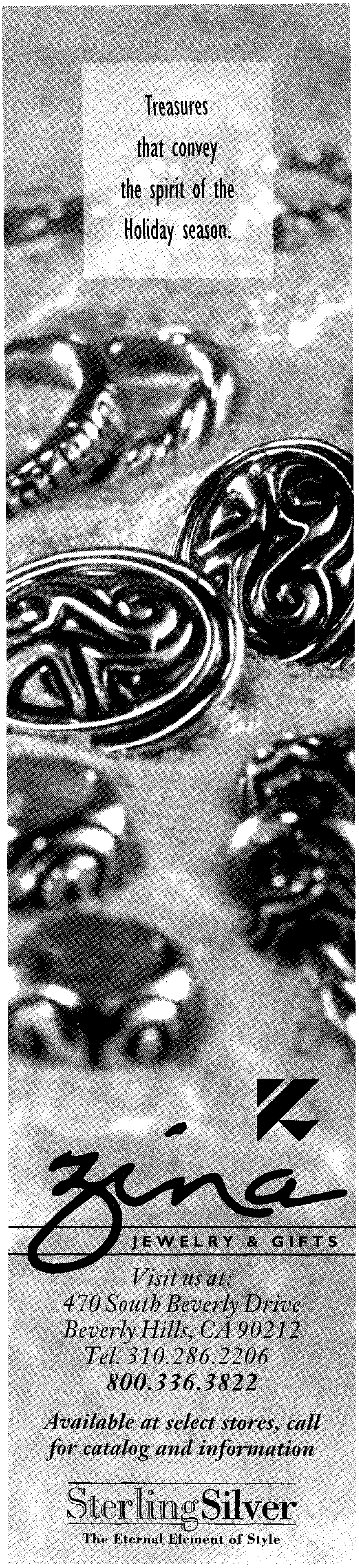

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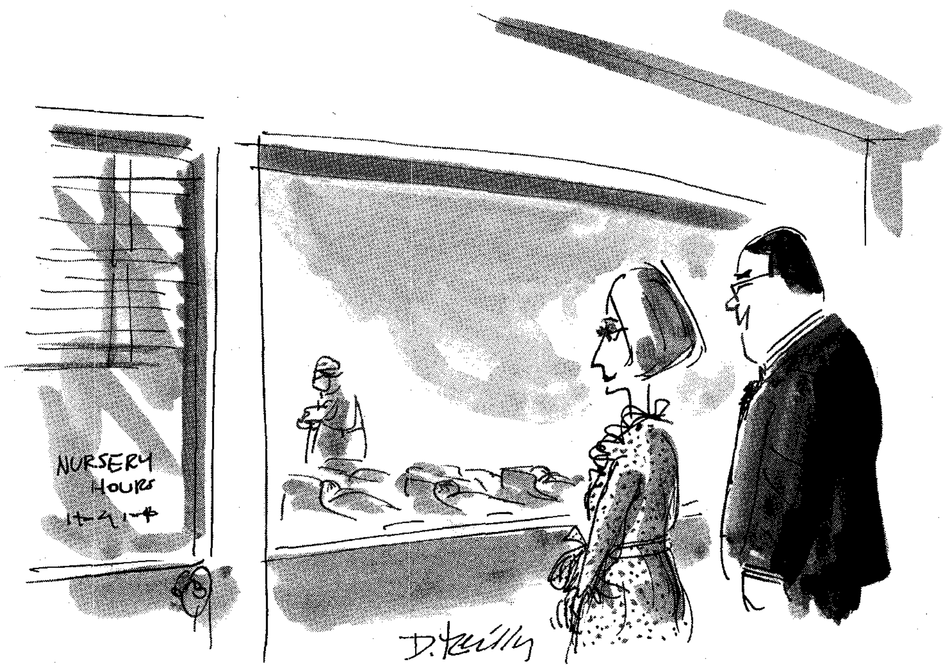

"It's a great feeling to have dealt with the child issue."

• •

steadily in the mid-nineteen-eighties, when the budget deficit was soaring, and it grew steadily a decade later, when the deficit was falling sharply. If it were true that economic growth and budget deficits are tied together in some close way, this couldn't have happened. The main factors that determine long-term prosperity are the amount of resources devoted to upgrading a country's human and physical capital and the efficiency with which these resources are used. Budget deficits can indirectly reduce capital spending by raising interest rates, thus making borrowing more costly, but they can also enhance investment if the government spends more on infrastructure, education, and research.

The moral argument against budget deficits is equally suspect. It usually starts off by comparing the country to an individual household and goes on to conclude that since individual families have to live within their means the government should do the same. Amateur logicians will detect a fallacy of composition in this argument, but there is a more basic problem with it than that. Most families do not balance their annual budgets. Typically, they put themselves tens (or hundreds) of thousands of dollars in debt to buy themselves a house, a car, and maybe even a summer home—and they are right to do so, since their lifetime earning power far exceeds their yearly income. If these families were to account for their spending in the same way that government departments account for theirs, they would appear to be running enormous deficits in the years they take out their loans. If they were particularly unfortunate, they might even have a relative like George Will, hectoring the rest of the family for having a purchasing pattern that "reflects moral failing" and partakes of "a defect in the formation of the public's character."

Any sensible discussion of public finances ought to move beyond Hooveresque pieties. To begin with, it should take account of the fact that today's budget deficit is the lowest in many years. In the 1996 fiscal year, which finished on September 30th, the government spent $107 billion more than it received in taxes. This sounds like a large number, but it was the smallest budget deficit since 1981, and was less than half the size of the 1995 deficit. As recently as 1993, the budget shortfall was more than $300 billion.

These numbers are suggestive, but they don't tell the full story. As with any borrower, what really matters is the borrower's—in this case, the country's—capacity to service and repay its debts, and the best way to gauge this is to compare the size of the budget deficit to the size of the economy. A decade ago, the Reagan Administration ran deficits that totalled more than five per cent of the gross domestic product for four years running. In 1983, for example, the budget gap was $208 billion, which amounted to 6.3 per cent of the total output of the economy that year. Not surprisingly, some economists back then were starting to mutter about Washington's becoming a Latin-American capital. Such talk was always exaggerated, but now it appears downright ridiculous. The budget deficit has been falling sharply for four years, and in 1996 it amounted to just 1.4 per cent of the national income—a figure lower than any seen since Richard Nixon was in the Oval Office.

In international terms, too, America's recent performance looks stellar. Japan, Germany, France, Canada, Britain, and Italy all have budget deficits that are at least twice the size of ours. And this is not due to the fact that other countries are in less favorable stages of the business cycle, as is sometimes claimed: the "structural" budget deficit, which strips out these cyclical effects, is also much lower in the United States than elsewhere.

As the baby boomers approach retirement, there are some tough policy questions ahead: How much of the national income should be allocated to the old and the sick? What about education, defense, and the inner cities? As long as the economy grows faster than the national debt, the exact size of the budget deficit should be a secondary consideration. Furthermore, even the figure of $107 billion may overstate the real size of the deficit, because it does not take into account the fact that inflation erodes the value of government debt. As prices rise, the purchasing power of the dollar falls, and this means that the government repays its debts in money that is less valuable than it was when the debts were issued. From the Treasury's perspective, this process acts like an increase in revenues; economists refer to it as an "inflation tax." With prices rising at three per cent a year and the amount of federal debt held by the public totalling about $3.75 trillion, the "inflation tax" was worth approximately $112.5 billion in fiscal 1996. If this figure is deducted from the $107-billion deficit, then it appears that the government actually ran a $5.5-billion budget surplus this year—not something you are likely to hear on "The McLaughlin Group."

—JOHN CASSIDY

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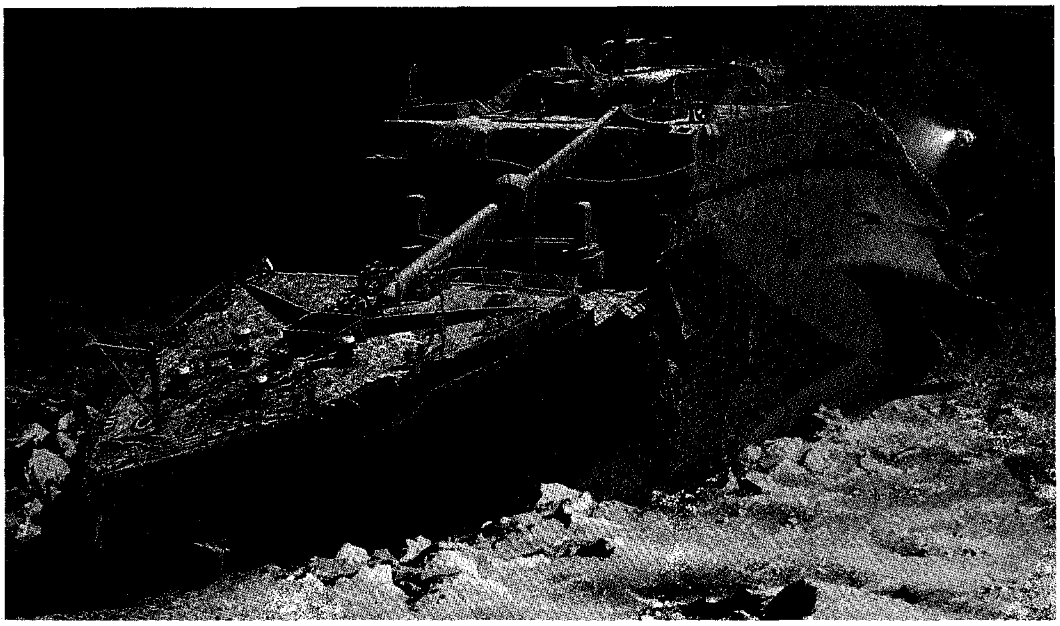

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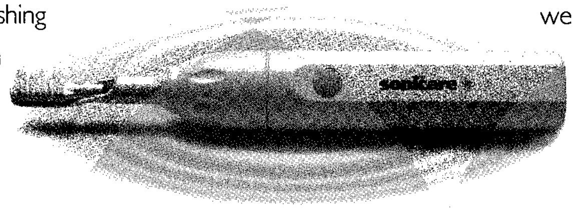

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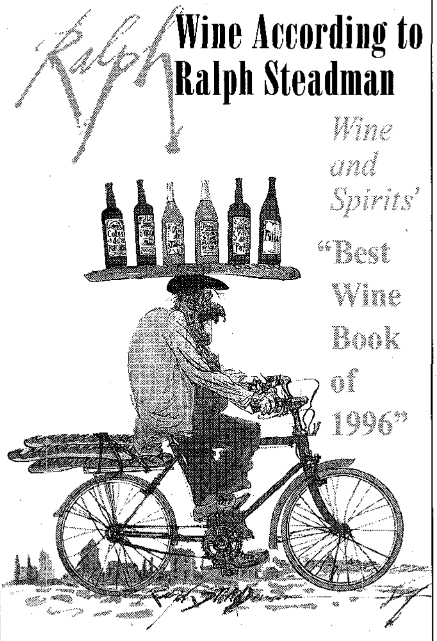
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IN THE MAIL

LITTLE SAVAGES?

Imagine my surprise at discovering that my seemingly normal nuclear family was included in Professor John DiIulio's definition of families producing "moral poverty": children "growing up surrounded by deviant, delinquent, and criminal adults in chaotic, dysfunctional, fatherless, Godless, and jobless settings" ("The Criminals of Tomorrow," by James Traub, November 4th). Does DiIulio truly believe that human beings cannot be moral without believing in the existence of a God or gods? There are ample numbers of godless families that maintain good family values (to borrow a phrase from the self-righteous). Far too many violent acts have already been carried out in the name of God for religion to be an appropriate part of this debate.

LEONARD G. LANE, JR.
Houston, Texas

As the director of the "anti-incarceration" organization singled out for criticism by Professor DiIulio, I was disturbed to see many of the distortions he used to bolster his case for more incarceration. Those of us who see the current level of incarceration as excessive have come to this conclusion not only because of the often counterproductive effects of imprisonment but also because the unprecedented increase in incarceration in the past twenty years has not brought a sense of well-being to most communities. Rather, the communities that most of us would define as "safe" have achieved that status by creating strong families and economic opportunities. Let us not forget that many of the "super-predators" DiIulio warns us about are young children today. Shall we plan for their future by constructing new prison cells for them or by creating educational and employment options that would offer them and us a brighter future?

MALCOLM C. YOUNG
The Sentencing Project
Washington, D.C.

THE NATURE OF OBSESSION

Far be it from me to disagree with Daphne Merkin's assessment (Books, "The Years with Roth," November 4th) of the actress Claire Bloom as "a scorpion posing as a trapped butterfly," who married for gain, dismissed each divorce with minimal insight, and—far worse—bored us with the shallowness of her emotional life. But Merkin seems to see Bloom pretty much the way that, after the first few years, Philip Roth must have seen her: as selfish, powerful, manipulative, conscious of her own motives, and guilty of malice. I disagree. Love may be blind, but masochistic obsession is blind, deaf, dumb, and crippled. The struggle to possess the object of obsession is fraught with humiliation, self-loathing, helpless fury, and loss of perspective, none of which someone in Bloom's situation (well known, greedy for adulation) would ever disclose in detail. The tragic—and mortifying—thing about obsession is that it is neither conscious nor intentional; that Bloom attributes her plight to Roth only illustrates this.

PATRICIA B. ORCHARD
Brooklyn, N.Y.

WAITING FOR COMMON SENSE

Regarding the post-relevant symposium on intellectual standards at New York University which put the physicist Alan Sokal on the cultural-studies firing line ("A Matter of Gravity," by Malcolm Gladwell, November 11th): Samuel Beckett should have been there to measure the postmodernists for ash cans.

PETER T. MAIKEN
Beloit, Wis.

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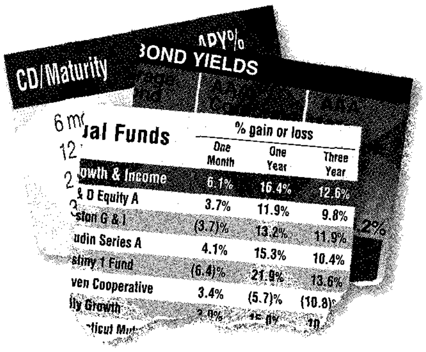
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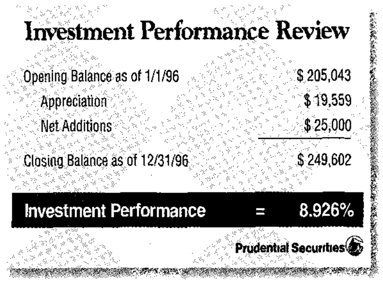

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE HOLIDAYS

Keeping everyone happy during the holidays is a tall order, but there's no getting around the season's mandate to celebrate. So, in the interest of merriment and tranquillity, here's a range of options.

SEASONAL SPECIALTIES

"The Radio City Christmas Spectacular"—Santa dances, sings, and—for the first time—conducts the orchestra, in the annual extravaganza, which also includes live animals and (of course) the Rockettes. (Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Through Jan. 5.)

"A Christmas Carol"—Tony Randall is Scrooge and Ben Vereen is the Ghost of Christmas Present in a musical version of Dickens's holiday tale. Alan Menken wrote the score. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. Through Jan. 5.) . . . ¶ On Dec. 8 at 2, Gregg Whiteside, the voice of WQXR, reads from Dickens's original manuscript, at the Morgan Library, where it is on display through Jan. 5. (29 E. 36th St. For tickets, call 685-0008, ext. 347.)

A Suite of "Nutcracker"s—Variations on a holiday theme. The New York City Ballet is home to the Balanchine charmer, through Jan. 5. (New York State Theatre. 870-5790.) . . . ¶ Donald Byrd presents an affectionate uptown remix, "The Harlem Nutcracker," at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. (30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4174. Dec. 11 at 7, Dec. 12-13 at 8, Dec. 14 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 15 at 3.) . . . ¶ Doug Elkins Dance Company warns that its downtown "Nutcracker," "Fruitcake Follies," is definitely *not* the classic. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Wednesdays through Sundays, Dec. 11-29, at 8.) . . . ¶ Choreographer Francis Patrelle contributes an East Side version, "The Yorkville Nutcracker." (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Dec. 19 at 7, Dec. 20 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 21 at 8.)

"Nativity"—The Vermont-based Bread and Puppet Theatre draws on Bible stories, circus acts, and the Russian folk drama "The Death of King Herod" as it adapts the Christmas story to its tastes. (Los Kabayitos Puppet Theatre, C.S.V. Cultural Center, 107 Suffolk St. 260-4080, ext. 14. Thursdays through Saturdays at 8, Sundays at 3. Through Dec. 22.)

"La Cantata dei Pastori"—An adaptation by I Giullari di Piazza, a group devoted to performing traditional Italian theatre, of a seventeenth-century Neapolitan Christmas play, complete with music, dance, puppets, and commedia-dell'arte characters. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 924-0077. Dec. 7 at 8 and Dec. 8 at 3.)

Trees—The a-cappella group the Persuasions rocks in the season with Big Bird and other "Sesame Street" characters at the lighting of Lincoln Center's forty-foot blue spruce. (Fountain Plaza. Dec. 5 at 6:45.) . . . ¶ Eighteenth-century Neapolitan angels and crèche figures grace the boughs and ring the trunk of the Metropolitan Museum's twenty-foot artificial blue spruce. There is a lighting ceremony every Friday and Saturday at 7. (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. Through Jan. 5.) . . . ¶ Origami beetles, meteorites, and swans hang from the branches of the fourteen-foot artificial evergreen at the American Museum of Natural History, and a flock of paper dinosaurs looks on. (Central Park W. at 79th St. Through Jan. 5.) . . . ¶ The South Street Seaport's singing Christmas tree sprouts with the St. Cecilia Chorus. (East River at Fulton St. Thursdays and Fridays at 6:30 and 7:30, Saturdays and Sundays at 3 and 4. Through Jan. 1.) . . . ¶ And don't forget the mother of all Christmas trees—ninety feet of Norway spruce—at Rockefeller Center, through Jan. 1.

Playtime—You can find out what topped children's wish lists a century ago in "New York Toy Stories," at the Museum of the City of New York. More than three hundred toys and dolls are on display, many in knee-high vitrines for easy peering by little people. The museum is also hosting seasonal workshops, storytelling sessions, concerts for kids, a holiday party on Dec. 8 at 1, and—just so you don't forget—a thank-you-note session on Dec. 26 at 11. (Fifth Ave. at 104th St. 534-1672, ext. 206. The toy exhibit runs through April 27.) . . . ¶ At the New York Botanical Garden, master puppeteer Ralph Lee dramatizes "The Little Engine That Could" while, in exhibition greenhouses, large-gauge model trains run through tunnels, over bridges, and around reproductions of New York City landmarks. (Bronx Park. For the puppet-show schedule, call 718-817-8700.)

Hanukkah—Come sundown on Dec. 5, the first flame will grace the thirty-two-foot menorah at Fifth Ave. and 59th St. New lights will be added each evening through Dec. 12, with music, dancing, and potato pancakes on Dec. 8, starting at 8. (For more information, call 718-778-6000.) . . . ¶ Sherry Blumberg, an associate professor of Jewish education, explores the meaning of Hanukkah in a family workshop that features singing, candle-making, and theatricals. (Great Hall, Hebrew Union College, 1 W. 4th St. Dec. 8 at 1.) . . . ¶ The Poppy Seed Players present "Judy and the Maccabees" and "Hannah the Joyful," a pair of one-acts for children. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Dec. 8 at 10 A.M. and Dec. 15 at 11 A.M.)

Winter Solstice—The ten Russian singers and dancers of the Dmitri Pokrovsky Ensemble, from Moscow, and the eighteen percussionists and dancers of the Forces of Nature Dance Theatre Company, from New York, join Paul Winter, his Consort, the Celtic soprano Noírín Ní Riain, and the gospel singer Theresa Thomason in an anticipatory celebration of the moment when the days start lengthening again. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133. Dec. 12-13 at 7:30, and Dec. 14 at 2 and 7:30.) . . . ¶ Following three hours of music for the *shakuhachi*, James Nyoraku Schlefer marks the solstitial instant (Dec. 21 at 9:06 A.M.) by conducting the world première of his "Shakuhachi Sound," a piece for eighteen of the Japanese bamboo flutes. (St. Marks In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Those who want to learn what the changing of the seasons means to local flora and fauna can join the Urban Park Rangers at 77th St. and Central Park W. on Dec. 22 at 11. (For more information, call 427-4040.)

Kwanzaa—On Dec. 7 at 4, the forty kids of Batoto Yetu (a youth-enrichment program whose name is Swahili for "our children") paint their faces, don African clothing, and dance their way through a program inspired by African folktales. (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. For tickets, call 961-1197.) . . . ¶ Dancers and musicians celebrate "the first fruits of the harvest" (which is what the Swahili word *kwanzaa* means) at a traditional African marketplace. (American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. 769-5100. Dec. 27, starting at noon.)

SOUNDS OF THE SEASON

(See also Classical Music listings.)

Handel's "Messiah"—There's a "Messiah" for every taste around town this month. We have especially high expectations for the performances by the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola Choir and Orchestra, Kent Tritle directing (Park Ave. at 84th St.; 288-2520; Dec. 5 at 7:30), and by the St. Thomas Choir, with the Concert Royal, the Baroque orchestra (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St.; 757-7013, ext. 3027; Dec. 17 and Dec. 19 at 7:30).

Other Baroque Classics—Bach's "Christmas Oratorio" is performed by the Choral Symphony Society (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St.; Dec. 8 at 7; admission by contribution), and Monteverdi's "Christmas Vespers" marks Kent Tritle's maiden voyage as the Dessoff Choirs' music director (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St.; Dec. 13-14 at 8; for information about tickets, call 935-2551).

New York Philharmonic—The orchestra performs in three events of seasonal note at Avery Fisher Hall (875-5030): a concert by the Boys Choir of Harlem (Dec. 21 at 3) with members of the orchestra, a joint performance by the Canadian Brass and the orchestra's brass players (Dec. 28-29 at 3), and a New Year's Eve Gala (Dec. 31 at 8) conducted by Zubin Mehta, with soprano Renée Fleming and violinist Midori as the superstar guests.

New York Pops—Skitch Henderson leads light seasonal fare for choir and orchestra. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Dec. 13-14 at 8.)

Vienna Choir Boys—For those who like their Christmas sweets. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Dec. 15 at 7:30.)

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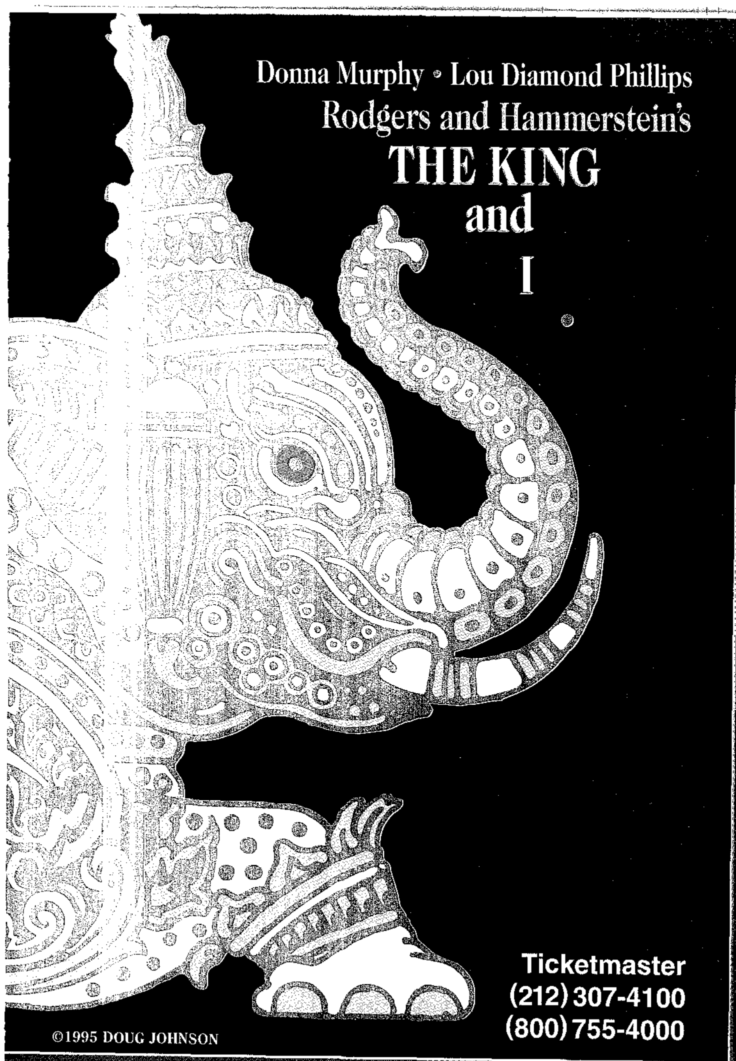

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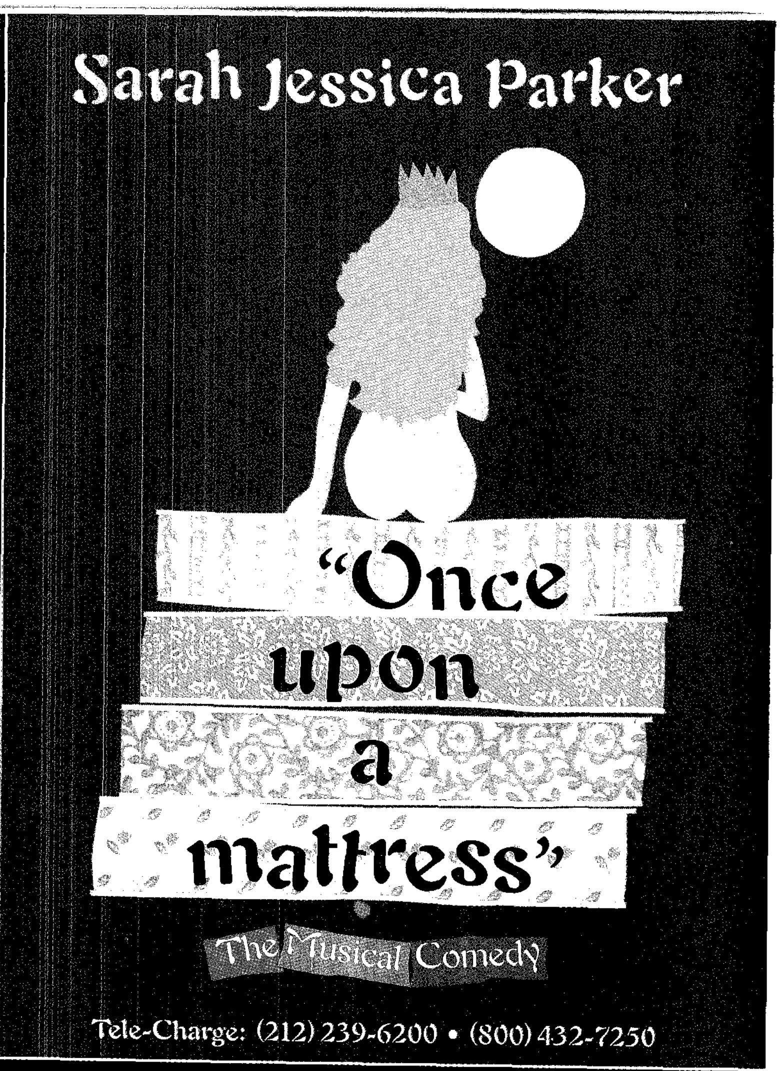

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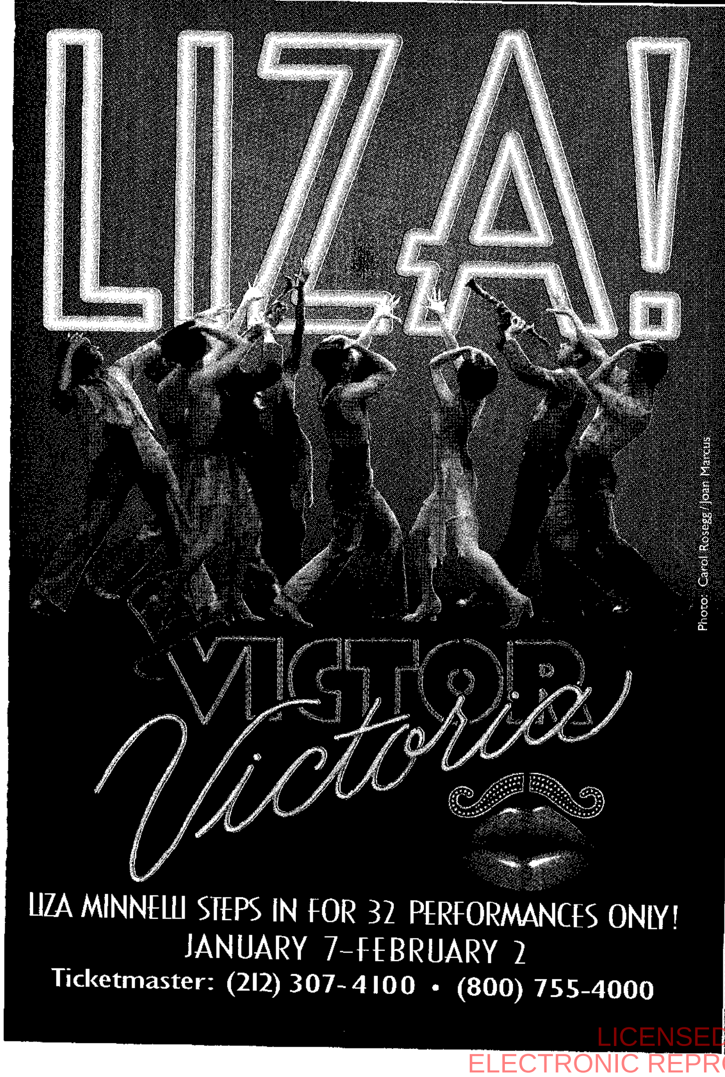

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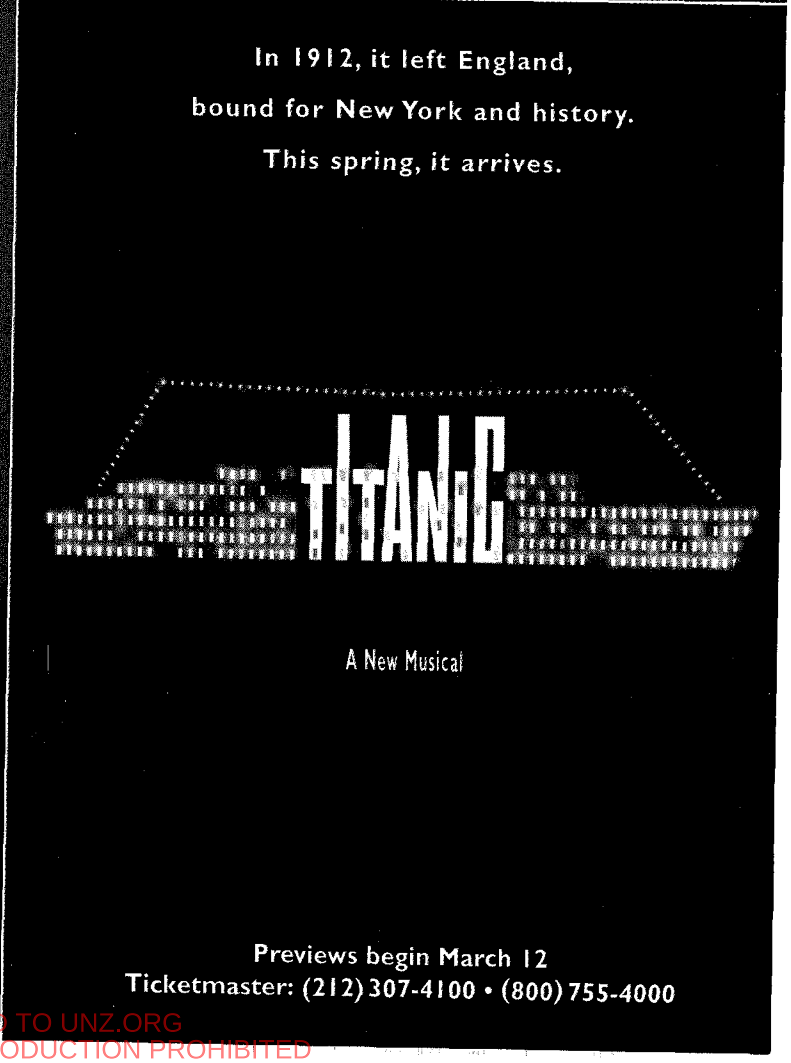

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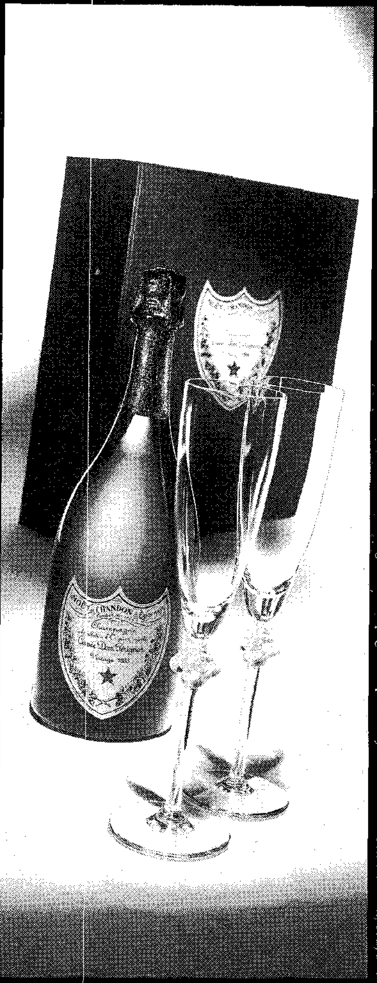

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ANONYMOUS 4—An entire program of medieval Hungarian Christmas music, much of it monophonic, may not be to all tastes, but listeners so inclined won't find it performed better than it will be by this world-famous women's quartet. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. 678-5432. Dec. 12-13 at 8. . . . ¶ Metropolitan Museum Medieval Sculpture Court, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Dec. 22 at 6:30 and 8:30.)

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

DREAMS & NIGHTMARES—The illusionist David Copperfield comes to Broadway, in a show written by David Ives. Three previews on Dec. 4. Opens Dec. 5 at 6:45 and continues through Dec. 29. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

HENRY VI, PARTS I, II, AND III—The New York Shakespeare Festival presents the trilogy, which will run in repertory as "Part 1: The Edged Sword" and "Part 2: Black Storm." In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

INSURRECTION: HOLDING HISTORY—Robert O'Hara wrote and directed this new time-travel comedy, set in Southampton, Virginia, during the slave uprising led by Nat Turner. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

ONCE UPON A MATTRESS—Gerald Gutierrez directs Sarah Jessica Parker in a revival of the 1959 musical, based on "The Princess and the Pea." In previews. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

SCAPIN—Bill Irwin and Mark O'Donnell's adaptation of Molière's comedy "The Rogueries of Scapin," starring and directed by Mr. Irwin, in a Roundabout Theatre Company production. In previews. (Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

TOOTH OF CRIME (SECOND DANCE)—Sam Shepard's new version of his 1972 drama about a rock star past his prime, with a new star, Vincent D'Onofrio, and new music, by T-Bone Burnett. In previews. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

ANNE FRANK AND ME—The American Jewish Theatre begins its season with a drama by Cherie Bennett. (307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes Dec. 15.)

BEAT: A SUBWAY COP'S COMEDY—John DiResta, New York City transit policeman and stand-up comic, files a report on his subterranean workplace. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

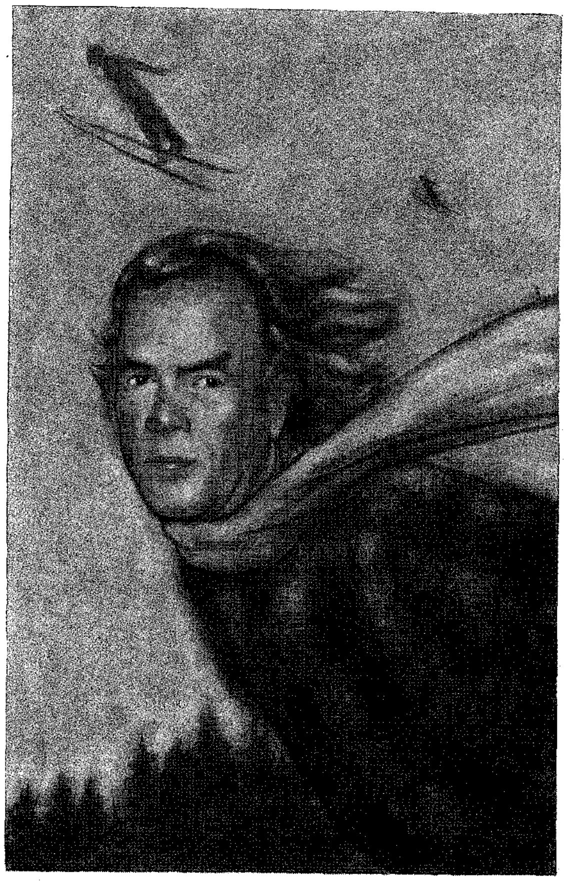
A BRIEF HISTORY OF WHITE MUSIC—A comic revue by Dee Dee Thomas and David Tweedy, in which an all-black cast interprets the music of Sonny and Cher, the Beach Boys, the Beatles, and other honkies. (Village Gate, 240 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

CAKEWALK—The subject of Peter Feibleman's play is his twenty-year relationship with Lillian Hellman, and his version of the truth is unseemly and self-serving. As Hellman, Linda Lavin gets off some good ones, but she seems almost too healthy, emotionally and physically, to play the poison-filled, self-promoting playwright. Michael Knight, the author's stand-in, is blandly charming and, unlike any writer we know, has the body of a lifeguard. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/18/96.) (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

CHICAGO—Walter Bobbie's bookless, setless revival of the 1975 Kander-Ebb-Fosse extravaganza of cynicism. The story is about a woman who gets away with murder; this pared-down concert posing as a full-dress musical may do the same. (11/25/96) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

THE COCOANUTS—The American Jewish Theatre's revival of the Irving Berlin–George S. Kaufman musical that starred the Marx Brothers in 1925. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

THE ENTERTAINER—This Classic Stage Company production of John Osborne's bitter pill of a play about a faded music-hall performer in a faded British seaside town, directed by David Esbjornson and starring Brian Murray, doesn't have the stuff: it's unfocussed and never really gels. Murray is certainly touching—as always—but he may have too much warmth as an actor to be able to paint a convincing portrait of hardened despair, and Jean Stapleton, who was, of course, just right as that *other* Archie's wife, seems miscast as this one's. Douglas Seale, as Archie's cranky but dignified father, is the only cast member who seems to hit just the right notes. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes Dec. 8.)



Spalding Gray, in "It's a Slippery Slope."

JAMES BURRIS

FAMILY VALUES—A sex comedy by the Canadian playwright Carl Ritchie. Ed (Joel Fabiani) is a blustery podiatrist who longs for the days when his ex-wife (Ellen Evans) would rub his feet for hours on end; he also wishes that his son weren't, as he puts it, a "fruit," and that his daughter weren't "boinking" her boyfriend. Daniel Ettinger's set, an apartment awash in chintz, is much more tasteful than the sitcomlike proceedings. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 358-5174.)

FULL GALLOP—The legendary, vividly eccentric fashion editor Diana Vreeland is the subject of Mary Louise Wilson and Mark Hampton's one-woman play, in which Wilson stars. Set in 1971, shortly after Vreeland was fired from *Vogue*, it's very funny and very moving. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

GOD SAID, "HA!"—A mordant saga that is really an act of mourning passing as a good night out. Julia Sweeney, departing from her "Saturday Night Live" persona, tells the audience what happened when her brother Mike was diagnosed with terminal cancer and moved into her newly acquired Hollywood bungalow, only to be followed there by her father and mother; in the following months, they lived through Mike's long dying and her own cervical cancer. These are very rough waters to navigate, but Sweeney sails through them elegantly and winningly. (12/2/96) (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Golden Child—David Henry Hwang, returning to the task of finding a language in which to express the psychic mutation of being at once Asian and American, has found a style uniquely his own. Moving between 1918 and the present, his new play opens up the parochial heart of the audience to a sense of otherness—not just the otherness of the Asian community, but the strangeness of all of us who consider ourselves American. Directed by James Lapine. (12/2/96) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes Dec. 8.)

Howard Crabtree's When Pigs Fly—The exuberant designer Howard Crabtree died in June, and this revue of witty, satiric songs (created with and written and directed by Mark Waldrop, and sung by a talented cast dressed in Crabtree's sequinned, feathered, mind-boggling costumes) is a fitting cap to his career. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change—In made-for-musical-theatre voices, the appealing cast of Joe DiPietro and Jimmy Roberts's crowd-pleasing revue about love and marriage sings songs examining made-for-musical-theatre issues. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

The Importance of Being Earnest—This very pleasing and intimate production of Oscar Wilde's nonpareil comedy marks the designer Tony Walton's New York directorial début, and he has assembled an excellent cast for the occasion. An Irish Repertory Theatre production. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Dec. 22.)

It's a Slippery Slope—With his new monologue, Spalding Gray continues to live out every neurotic New Yorker's dream: getting paid rather than charged for going on and on about his problems (and getting famous doing it). He uses learning to ski as a metaphor for his plummeting-downhill feelings about fatherhood, leaving his wife after fathering a child with another woman, the death of his own father, and other life "passages." He's so smooth and wry that you absolve him for his crappy behavior (it's part of a *learning* process), thereby absolving yourself, and that, of course, is where his appeal lies—but you still have to pay for it. Sundays and Mondays at the Vivian Beaumont. (Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Joseph Gabriel: Magic on Broadway—Mr. Gabriel has performed at the Las Vegas Flamingo Hilton for the past ten years, and his feats are certainly impressive, but it's all too clear from the trappings of his act—dancers in polka-dotted boxer shorts, a sequinned Elvis—that he hasn't left Nevada behind. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Juan Darién—A production of astonishing inventiveness from Julie Taymor, whose next task is to stage Disney's "The Lion King." She and her collaborator, the composer Elliot Goldenthal, bill their work as a "carnival mass"; based on a tale by the Uruguayan writer Horacio Quiroga (1878-1937), it tells the story of a baby jaguar who becomes human and is then turned back into an animal. Scene by scene, it's as visually moving as theatre can be—Taymor's puppets and masks are highly expressive, in and of themselves and in the expert way they're manipulated, and the sets, co-created by G. W. Mercier, are teeming with life. Yet overall the piece lacks emotional content; if you were a teacher, you'd give it an A+, but you'd take the student aside and say, "Next time, try to put more *feeling* into it." (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Late Nite Catechism—Maripat Donovan offers a commanding performance as the lone nun in charge of an adult catechism class, and the audience brings as much to the performance as the script does. It's hard to keep from laughing, though you may face a reprimand or two in the process. (St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

The New Bozena—Three very funny young clowns who approach life with hilarious innocence and touching wonder. One quivers with fear and timidity, one is gape-mouthed and a little slow, and

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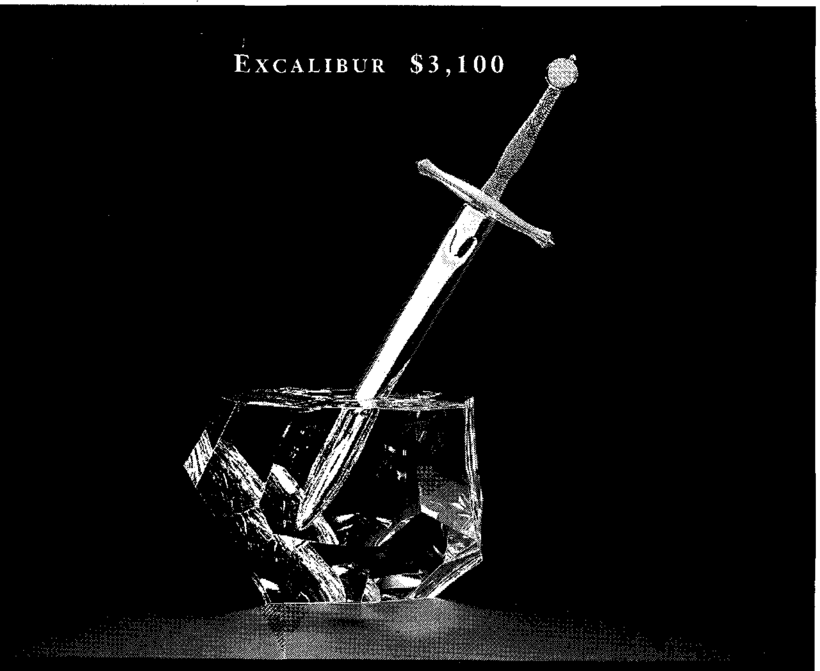

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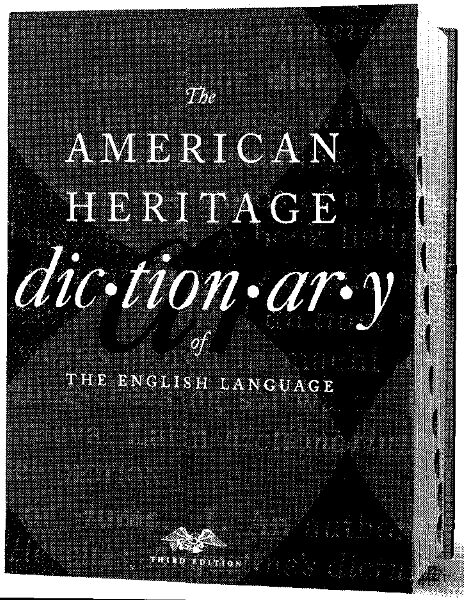


THE DICTIONARY FOR OUR TIMES

one has a catlike curiosity. Watching them is like watching babies discover the world. (11/18/96) (Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.)

Nine Armenians—Leslie Ayvazian's play is a well-worn American-immigrant tale, complete with kids who don't care about the past until a climactic revival of tradition which brings everyone together, but it's humorously told and superbly acted by a cast that includes Michael Countryman, Sophie Hayden, and Kathleen Chalfant. Lynne Meadow directed. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Old Wicked Songs—Jon Marans' well-written piece of sentimental sanctimony asks the question: Can a blocked, arrogant twenty-five-year-old pianist find wisdom under the tutelage of a suicidal singing teacher who survived the Holocaust? (The answer is yes.) (9/16/96) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

O Solo Mio Festival—The New York Theatre Workshop's solo-performance festival this year features works by Emmett Foster and Dael Orlandersmith. (79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

Present Laughter—As the West End star Garry Essendine, who struggles to keep at bay both his own monumental ego and the swarm of fans who surround him, Frank Langella keeps the core of Noël Coward's 1939 comedy of bad manners alive with a full-tilt assault on Essendine's outrageousness. Unfortunately, the director, Scott Elliott, seems to think that he's liberating Coward by turning the play into a bisexual romp. But he orchestrates some delicious farce moments, and the supporting players—including the excellent Tim Hopper, the astringent Lisa Emery, and the sophisticated Allison Janney—are funny even when Elliott is leading them down blind alleys. (11/25/96) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

The Queen of Bingo—It's Bingo Night at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, in Battle Creek, Michigan; Sis (Carmen Decker), an aging devotee of the game, and Babe (Nancy-Elizabeth Kammer), her chubby younger sister, play a few rounds, make catty remarks about their fellow-competitors, and, alas, have an emotional catharsis. The actors, particularly Decker, do fine, considering what the writers, Jeanne Michels and Phyllis Murphy, have given them, and the audience gets to play a round for a frozen turkey. (Greenwich House Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 239-6200.)

The Rehearsal—The Roundabout Theatre Company presents Jean Anouilh's play, in a production directed by Nicholas Martin. (Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

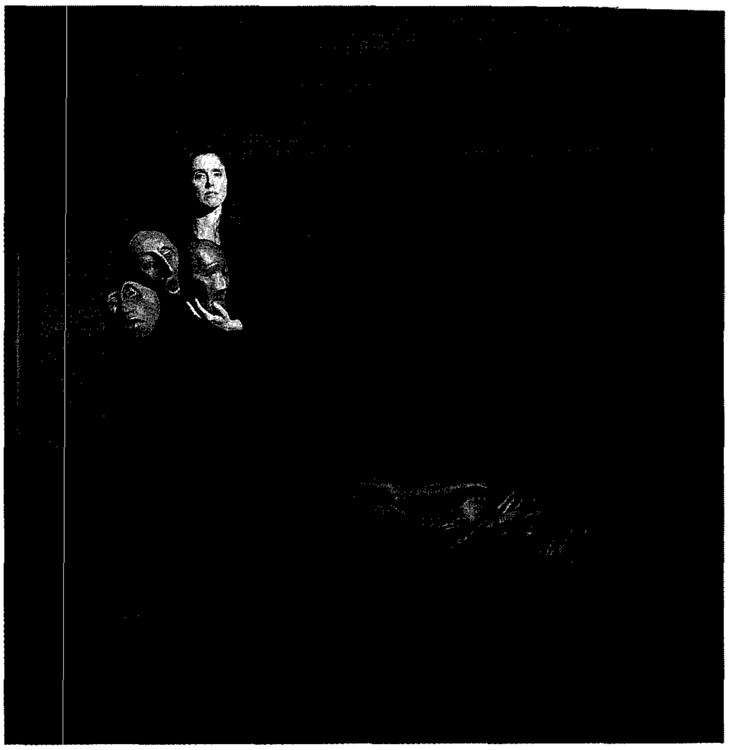
The Santaland Diaries—The writer David Sedaris has turned his piece about working as an elf at Macy's one Christmas into a monologue, but the material works much better on the page than it does on the stage. Timothy Olyphant is the sardonic elf; Joe Mantello directed this little slip of a show. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

The Seven Streams of the River Ota—Robert Lepage wrote and directed this eight-hour multimedia examination of the Holocaust and the AIDS epidemic. Presented by the Brooklyn Academy of Music. The play is performed in two parts and continues through Dec. 14. (Majestic, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. For more information, call 718-636-4100.)

Sharps, Flats & Accidentals—The Flying Karamazov Brothers blow into town with a new show of music-related jugglery. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Skylight—The playwright David Hare's success and his social conscience are still at odds. This time, the inimitable Michael Gambon plays a successful entrepreneur, and the powerful, appealing Lia Williams is his beloved former mistress, who has given up the lush life to teach the underprivileged. Their differences are factored out as systematically as an algebraic equation. (9/30/96) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

A Soldier's Play—Charles Fuller's Pulitzer Prize-winning 1982 play gets a powerful revival in the second production by the new Valiant Theatre Company. Clinton Turner Davis has directed this show—about the murder of a black Army sergeant in Louisiana in 1944—with the same clarity he brought to the New Federal's current "Joe Turner's Come and Gone," leaving room for the telling pause, the character-encapsulating gesture, and the humor that make the drama much more than an exploration of the many issues it raises. Sean Squire and Keith Randolph Smith stand out in a strong cast. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 8.)



Julie Taymor, director of "Juan Darién: A Carnival Mass."

JOSEF ASTOR

The Springhill Singing Disaster—Karen Trott plays all the roles, and all the guitars, in her comedy about the tribulations of a calamity-ridden folk-singer, which was seen last season at Playwrights Horizons. Directed by Lonny Price. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Taking Sides—Ronald Harwood's play, part fact and part fiction, stars Daniel Massey as the conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler and Ed Harris as an American Army officer who interrogates him about his alleged ties to the Nazis. The play is little more than a pileup of pieties and platitudes; its approach to moral complexity is deeply shallow. (11/4/96) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

The Vagina Monologues—Eve Ensler performs her one-woman show about, well . . . (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

The Waste Land—Sitting in a dark, dilapidated old theatre, we hear footsteps from the back of the house; Fiona Shaw climbs the stairs to the bare stage, twists in a light bulb, heads back toward the stairs—but then, as if deciding that speech is her only remaining option, she begins to recite. And, with the assistance of Deborah Warner's direction and Jean Kalman's minimal, evocative lighting, she makes a rich tapestry of T. S. Eliot's monumental poem, smoothly and believably animating the inhabitants of its "Unreal City" and giving us a glimpse of the whole from which these fragments have fallen. (Liberty, 234 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Dec. 15.)

When the World Was Green (A Chef's Fable) and Chicago—The Signature Theatre Company presents a pair of terrific one-acts by Sam Shepard (the first co-written in 1996 with the director Joseph Chaikin, the second from 1965) which are highlighted by two superb performances. In the new work, Alvin Epstein, as a prisoner who has killed the wrong man, creates a sad, reflective character who's pure poetry. In the second, Wayne Maugans plays a boy who is losing his girl; delivering a monologue from the bathtub that is part childish denial, part buffoonery, and part raw sex, he gives Shepard's reckless sixties language a juicy spin. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 15.)

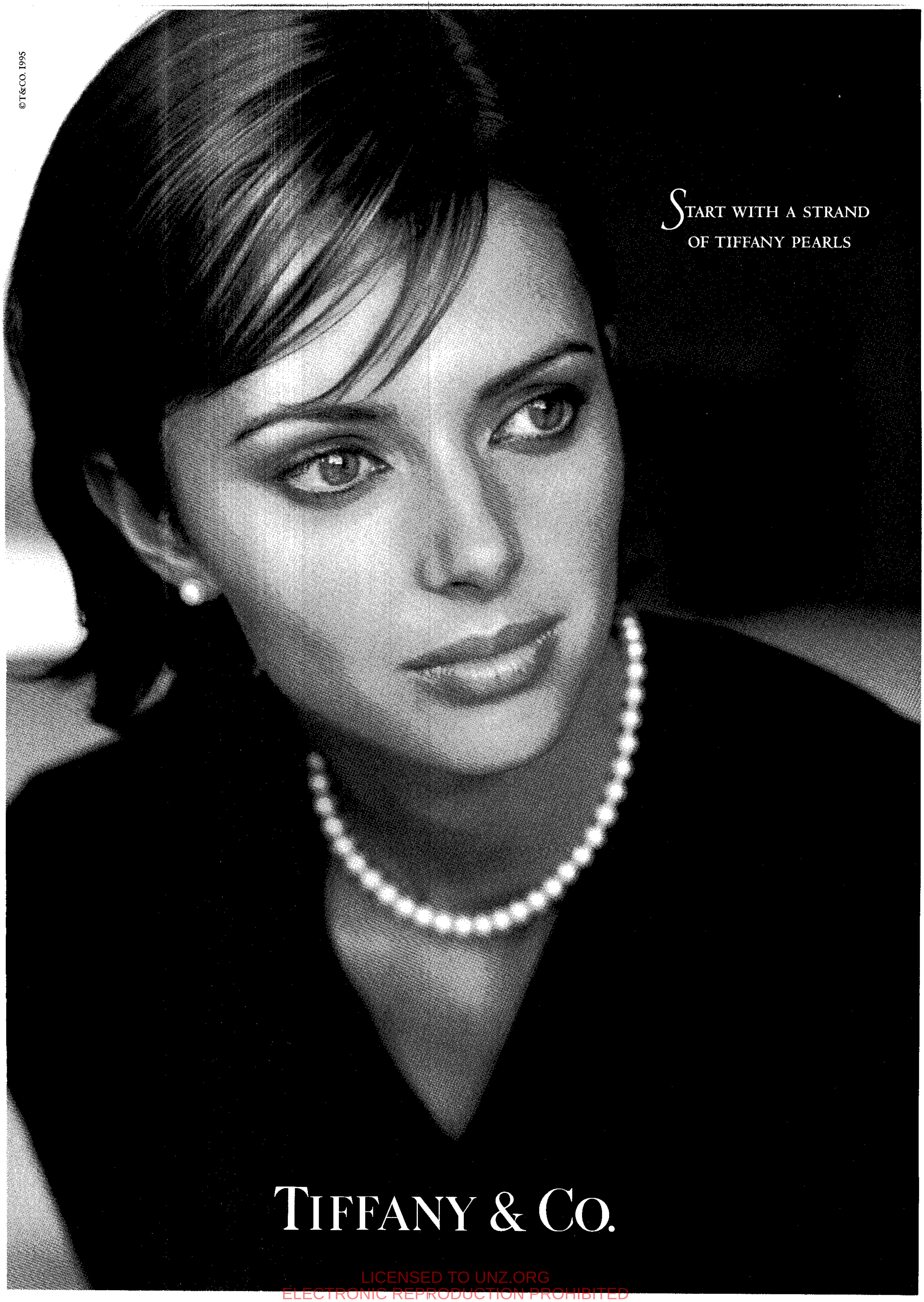
LONG RUNS

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **COWGIRLS:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **AN IDEAL HUSBAND:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE KING AND I:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. . . . **LOVE THY NEIGHBOR:** Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MASTER CLASS:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **SHOW BOAT:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **VICTOR/VICTORIA:** Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

DANCE

New York City Ballet—With its annual "Nutcracker" enchantment (through Jan. 5), the company returns to the business of inspiring little girls in pigtails to dream of a life *en pointe*. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Dec. 4-5 and Dec. 10 at 6, Dec. 6 at 8, Dec. 7 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 8 at 1 and 5.)

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre—Dec. 4 at 7: For its opening-night gala, the company performs "Night Creature," "Sweet Release," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 5 at 8: "For Bird—with Love," "Cry," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 8: "Riverside," "Polish Pieces," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 7 at 2, a family matinée: "Fathers and Sons," "Polish Pieces," and "The Winter in Lisbon." . . . ¶ Dec. 7 at 8: "Night Creature," "Cry," "Sweet Release," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 3: "Riverside," "Sweet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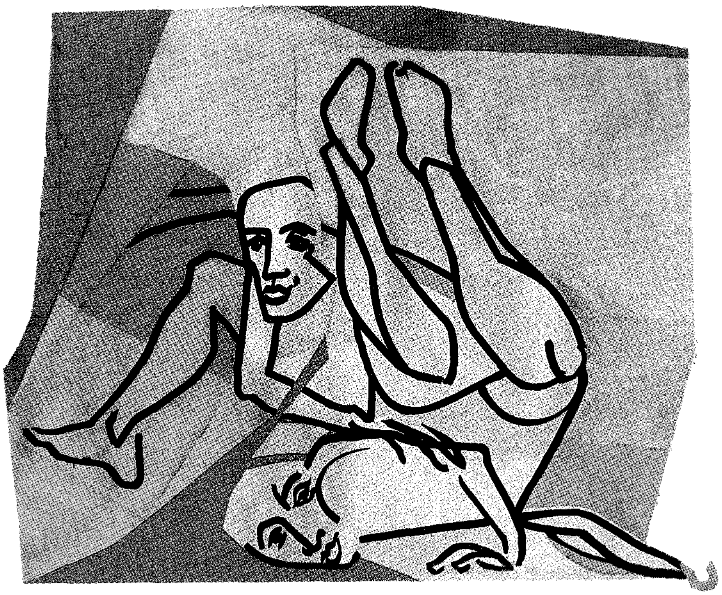
Release," and "The Winter in Lisbon." . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 7:30: "For Bird—with Love," "Cry," and "Revelations." ¶ Dec. 10 at 8: "Hymn," "Fandango," and "Suite Otis." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Through Dec. 31.)

Ballet Hispanico—The Upper West Side company premières works on Latin themes from David Roussève ("When Dreams Explode"), George Faison ("Idol Obsession"), and María Rovira ("Tierra de Nadie"). (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Dec. 3 at 7:30, Dec. 4-6 and Dec. 10 at 8, Dec. 7 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 8 at 2 and 7:30. Through Dec. 15.)

"Four Walls"—The choreographer Joy Kellman comes from a family of aerialists: her grandfather was an acrobat with a Czech circus, her mother a gymnast who performed household handstands well into her sixties. Kellman claims to be uncomfortable with such feats herself (her mother, she says, was a little overprotective), but she has no such qualms when it comes to her company: the seven members of her troupe, who will perform this week in four new pieces, tumble up and down so fluidly that one suspects the stage has been rubberized. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. For tickets, call 996-1100. Dec. 4-5 and Dec. 7-8 at 8.)

"Half-Life"—After dancing with Trisha Brown for seven years, Lance Gries (blond, strong, expansive) decided *not* to start his own company. Instead, in 1991, he created a one-man work, settling into the Kitchen to live there for a day and inviting the audience in to view the final hour. His current work, at the Randy Warshaw Dance Studio, extends the idea: "Half-Life," an evening-length collage of drama-infused movement which stops just short of telling a story, is the result of improvisations with dancers he invited to the loft and dance studio that he currently calls home. (115 Wooster St. For reservations, call Danspace Project at 674-8194. Dec. 5-8 at 8. Through Dec. 21.)



Joy Kellman Dance Company, in "Four Walls."

DAVID TOMB

"Two or Three Things I See in You"—Hillary Easton and Company in a première and two recent works. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Dec. 5-7 at 8 and Dec. 8 at 3.)

Mary Anthony Dance Theatre—For its fortieth-anniversary season, the company revives "Threnody," from 1956, its inaugural year; re-creates key works from the seventies; and premières "Tabula Rasa," to a score by Arvo Pärt. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Dec. 6-7 at 8.)

Liz Lerman Dance Exchange—This company, based in Washington, D.C., includes performers from twenty-three to seventy-one; the blend of talents is modest in the best sense, with young dancers seeing skills in their older counterparts that they themselves don't possess, and vice versa. This engagement features "Shehechianu" and "Flying Into the Middle." (Queens Theatre in the Park, Flushing Meadows–Corona Park. 718-760-0064. Dec. 7 at 8 and Dec. 8 at 3.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Counting Crows / Cake—Lead singer Adam Duritz still sounds like Van Morrison, and he has the kind of petulant ego that most pop stars take years to develop, but there's no getting around the fact that his band's début album, "August and Everything After," was an inspired collection of soulful, melodic rock. The group's second effort, "Recovering the Satellites," hit the charts at No. 1, but it lacks the charm of its predecessor. / The concept of charm is probably anathema to the members of Cake, a funky, low-budget combo from Sacramento which sounds like a cross between Soul Coughing and Pete Wilson. The band's fast-breaking single, "The Distance," may be the most irresistible song of 1996. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Dec. 4 at 8.)

Billy Taylor Trio—Taylor's piano work mirrors his persona: sturdy, erudite, and resolutely mainstream. The epiphanies may be few, but quality is a given. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Dec. 5 at 7.)

Ira Gershwin's 100th-Birthday Concert—A salute to the master lyricist, hosted by Angie Dickinson. With Rosemary Clooney, Dawn Upshaw, Maureen McGovern, and Gershwin's erstwhile amanuensis Michael Feinstein. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Dec. 6 at 7:30.)

Cyrus Chestnut—Pianist Chestnut is equal parts Art Tatum and Count Basie: a maniacal speed demon who can turn around and deliver the goods with a single note. His straddling the line between prolixity and economy has been the chief fascination of his brief career. Like his celebrated peer Jacky Terrasson, he's a bit of a showoff: he can do any- and everything on his instrument—but who asked him to? When he relaxes and his bluesy phrases flow like a woodland stream, he's untouchable. His latest record, a solo recital of church music called "Blessed Quietness," is heartfelt and lovely, and it reveals an expansive emotionalist behind the gushing virtuoso. The setting of this show couldn't be more appropriate to the material. (St Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 718-858-2424. Dec. 6 at 8.)

Karen Akers—The statuesque Francophone brings her elegant new show, "Dear Miss Akers," to the Upper East Side. Is she French? American? Swiss, perhaps? It's all part of her mystique—which is formidable (and a necessity if you're in the habit of singing almost an entire show in a foreign language). But rest assured she"ll be beautiful, poised, and gracious, and she'll sing with exquisite if not entirely authentic Gallic angst. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Dec. 7 at 7:30 and 10.)

Bernadette Peters—In a benefit performance. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 9 at 8.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Blarney Star, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Home to fine Irish music every Friday night.

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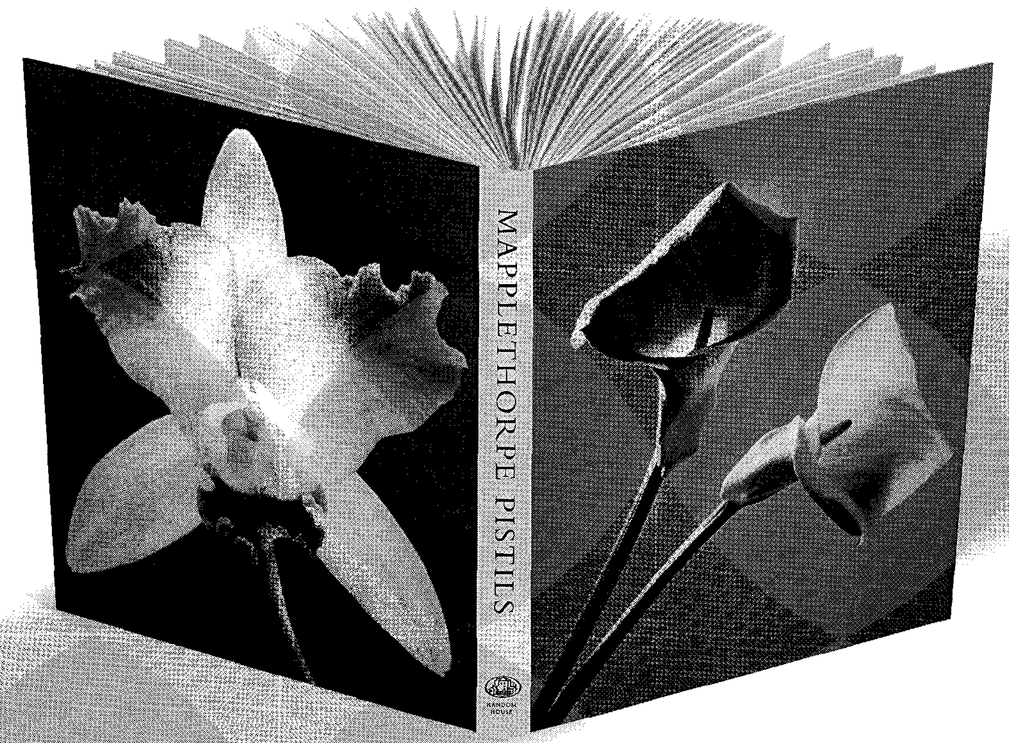
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Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Decent sight lines, great greasy food, prodigiously talented waitresses, and a consistent roster of high-quality acts.

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Dec. 5: **CATHERINE.** Like their better-known peers in Garbage, the members of this Chicago-based quartet are led by an angelic singer (in this case Mark Rew, a languid, alarmingly female-sounding tenor) who delivers vocal confectionery over industrial-strength rock grooves. But, except for the standout leadoff track, "Whisper," the songs on Catherine's second record, "Hot Saki & Bedtime Stories," aren't quite up to those of Garbage. Still, they're playing in a small club, and they'll be close enough to reach out and touch. Dec. 7: The **UPPER CRUST.** According to this Boston-based band's principal singer, Lord Rockingham (the other members are Jackie Kickassis, Marquis Mark, Le Duc D'istortion, and Lord Bendover), the impetus behind his band's shtick—powdered wigs, tight knickers, English accents—was boredom. As Rockingham explains it, "We like to think of ourselves as five wealthy aristocrats who are trying to learn how to rock. Actually, we're really just five misfits in eighteenth-century glam."

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Dedicated to the music of the Windy City. Dec. 6-7: **SON SEALS.** One of the leading figures of post-sixties blues, this son of an Arkansas juke-joint operator plays in the slashing, urgent style of his mentor, Albert King. Such aptly named classics as "Chicago Fire" (1980) helped cement his reputation, and live he still smolders.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar hidden inside the Time Café. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is a fine spot to take in a show. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

The Greatest Bar on Earth, 1 World Trade Center (524-7000)—Hyperbole, perhaps, but it's certainly the highest. And Thursdays through Saturdays you'll find live music, dancing, and dining, a hundred and seven stories above the city.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. Dec. 4: Rock with **NADA SURF.** Dec. 6: The **BODEANS.**

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Dec. 4: **ALEX CHILTON.** Is he the most underrated or the most overrated artist in the history of rock and roll? It's a question that remains unanswered about the man from Memphis who (as a high-school sophomore) put the gravel in the Box Tops' classic, "The Letter." Over the past three decades, he's been the leader of Big Star, the Cramps' producer, a dishwasher, and the subject of a Replacements song; these days, he seems content to cut records that showcase his sardonic approach to blues, rockabilly, country, and R. & B. (his latest is "A Man Called Destruction"). Like any self-respecting cult hero, Chilton can be a surly pill who occasionally disses his worshipful audience with a lousy show. But the risk is worth it—he's the closest thing we have to a one-man time line of American pop. With former Suicide member **ALAN VEGA.** Dec. 7-8: The **SCUD MOUNTAIN BOYS.** Dec. 10: The **HEALTH AND HAPPINESS SHOW.**

Les Poulets, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and, now and then, a cha-cha. Dining.

Rodeo Bar, 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500)—The walls simulate a log cabin, a buffalo head blows smoke through its nostrils, a horse trailer has been converted into a bar, and you get peanuts for eating and, sometimes, throwing.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Dec. 5: **SLASH'S BLUES BALL.** The hirsute former guitarist for Guns n' Roses brings his latest sludgefest to town. Dec. 6-7: The **FUNKY METERS.** Now that funk historicism is all the rage, it's a good time to applaud the mighty Meters. As the New Orleans counterpart of Memphis's Booker T. and the MGs, the Meters were the backbone of that city's soul sound; their hits define funk at its leanest and toughest.

Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **ANDREA MARCOVICCI** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Dining.

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—The legendary club has a new address and bigger digs, and Charlie Parker's name still shines proudly on the awning. And on the banner behind the stage. And on the T-shirts and sweatshirts in the gift shop. The black-and-white photographs of jazz greats are for sale, so you can really savor the memories. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Dec. 8: The **BLUE NOTE FIFTEENTH-ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION** featuring **BETTY CARTER.** Starting Dec. 10: Pianist **DIANNE REEVES.** Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through New Year's Eve, the great **BOBBY SHORT.** Time has not diminished the tasteful virtuosity of Short's ivory-tinkling, nor has it taken the edge off his gregarious wit as a singer and showman. A fixture at the Carlyle, he can still spin an Ira Gershwin lyric with all the sophistication, humor, and pathos it deserves. Also well served are gems by Duke Ellington, Dorothy Fields, Irving Berlin, and, of course, Cole Porter. A de-lightful, de-lovely evening. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** is in attendance.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel, with twenty-two-foot-high ceilings, a long backlit bar stocked with single-malt Scotch, and fine jazz seven nights a week. Dining.

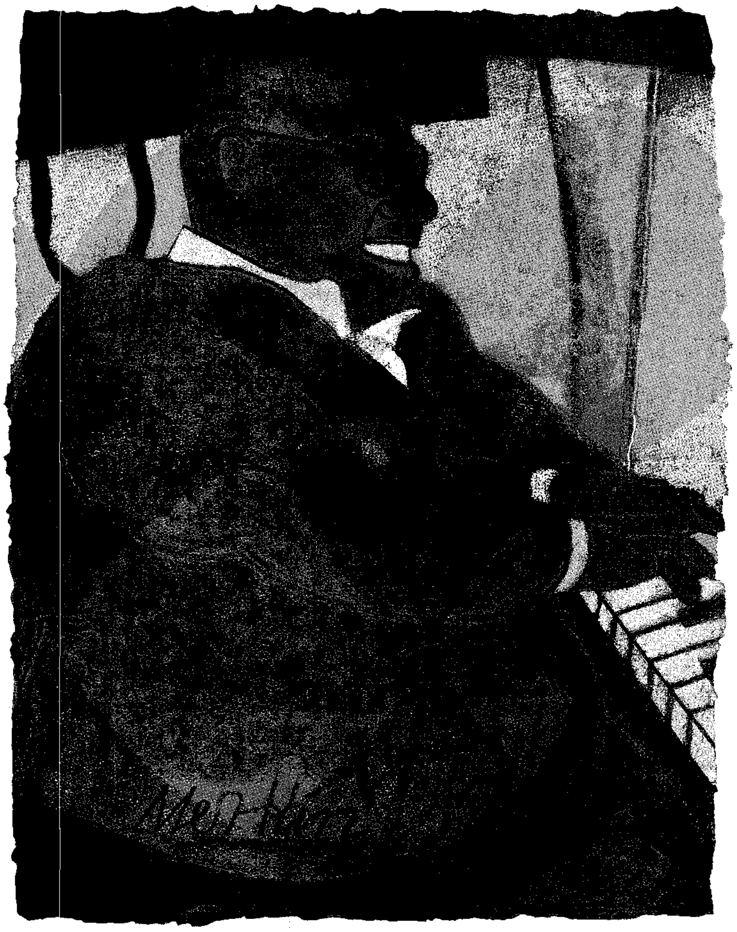
Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Dec. 8: The **TITO PUENTE LATIN JAZZ ENSEMBLE.** Puente, the grand old man of salsa, loves his jazz, too. Rhythmic excitement is guaranteed: this guy could make a polka band swing. And don't bother requesting the Puente-cum-Santana hit "Oye Como Va"—chances are it's already on the set list. Starting Dec. 10: **BILLY STRITCH,** a tuneful Texan who captured attention in the early eighties as the bottom third of the vocal trio Montgomery, Plant, and Stritch. The group broke up in 1990, but Stritch persevered as a singing pianist and an arranger (most spectacularly for Liza Minnelli). In this show, he'll range through jazz, cabaret, country, and comic numbers, backed up by a trio.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, and a piano. Dec. 4-7: **JUDY CARMICHAEL** strides like Fats Waller's daughter, and in saxophonist **MIKE HASHIM** she's got a partner hooked into her pre-swing groove.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Dec. 6-7: **JOHN ZORN'S MASADA.** From Benny Goodman and Stan Getz to Ziggy Ellman and Al Cohn, jazz has been home to prominent Jewish musicians. The Masada ensemble examines Jewish musical traditions in an improvisatory climate. While Eastern European klezmer and the free jazz of Ornette Coleman aren't often mentioned in the same breath, in Zorn's hands their similarities—wrenching dirges, polyphony, modal melodies both lyrical and feverish—cohere and form a new music. Swollen with deep folk spirit but completely unsentimental, the project blends Zorn's gift for experimentation and play with his abiding (if often twisted) reverence for tradition. Using the same pianoless instrumentation as the classic early Coleman units, Masada is made up of serious improvisers—Zorn on alto sax, Greg Cohen on bass, Joey Barron on drums, and Dave Douglas on trumpet—who turn out this warped roots music with conviction and (dare we say the word below Houston Street?) love.

Le Madeleine, 403 W. 43rd St. (246-2993)—Every Sunday evening, guitar great **GENE BERTONCINI** lights up this cozy Hell's Kitchen bistro with his simmering melodicism and chordal grace.

Maxim's, 680 Madison Ave. (751-5111)—In 1985, Pierre Cardin spent millions to open this mock-nineteenth-century bistro, which features stained glass, bevelled mirrors, and inlaid ceilings. But the eighties ended, and the club went dark for five years. A new management has revamped the menu, lowered the prices, and "done away with the dress code." Dec. 6-7: From the world



Cyrus Chestnut, at St. Ann's Church, in Brooklyn.

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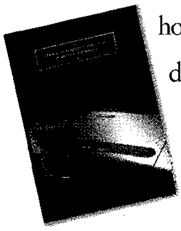

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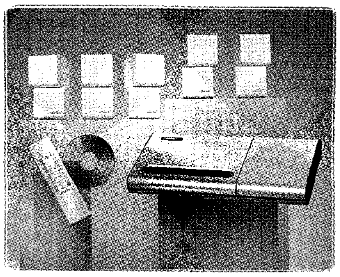

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RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. Through Dec. 7: Comic **RITA RUDNER**. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—Thursdays belong to Stan Rubin's big band, Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

Tight knickers and powdered perukes: the Upper Crust, at Brownies.

TRACY FUNCHES

SMALLS, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—This aptly named club features up-and-coming players jamming late into the night.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A jazz outpost where the musicians are always top-shelf. Through Dec. 8: The **DAVE KIKOSKI** trio, featuring **JOHN PATITUCCI** and **AL FOSTER**. Starting Dec. 10: **VINCENT HERRING** may have a Cannonball Adderley obsession, but lately he's been asserting his own highly charged personality. Dining.

TAVERN ON THE GREEN, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—This legendary tourist haven makes serious jazz fans welcome in the Chestnut Room, which resembles a hunting lodge and is every bit as over-the-top as the rest of the establishment. Dining.

VILLAGE GATE, 240 W. 52nd St. (307-5252)—Through Dec. 7: **WARREN VACHE** is here to remind us that there was life in the trumpet long before bebop. A supremely lyrical player whose honeysuckle tone summons up Louis Armstrong, Bunny Berrigan, and Bobby Hackett, Vache pumps fresh blood into the classics. Starting Dec. 10: The **ROY GERSON** quartet.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, smells, and feels like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. Through Dec. 8: **JIM HALL,** the Shakespeare of guitarists, would be a pleasure to hear even if he and his six-string were alone onstage. With special guests joining him each night, this engagement becomes a genuine event. Kenny Barron, Slide Hampton, Geoff Keezer, and Greg Osby will all bring something special to the table, but don't miss Saturday night's show, when the lyrical brassman and onetime Hall partner Art Farmer is doing the honors. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Masterpieces in Little: Portrait Miniatures from the Collection of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II." Seventy-five of the Queen's finest miniatures are here for a visit. The earliest ones are best: a portrait of Henry VIII by Lucas Hornebolte, one of the genre's progenitors, bristles with magnetic energy; a celebrated image of John Donne, by Isaac Oliver, captures a soul aflame with intelligence. The final portrait is the most bizarre: a ten-year-old Victoria dressed as a Turkish courtesan, twirling a string of pearls. An accompanying exhibition features the best of the Met's own extensive collection of miniatures, including works by Hans Holbein the Younger and Nicholas Hilliard (who are also represented in the Queen's collection). Both shows through Jan. 5. . . . ¶ The largest exhibition of the master landscape painter Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot mounted in more than a hundred years. Through Jan. 19. . . . ¶ "Eugène Cuvelier, Photographer in the Circle of Corot," an exhibit of salted-paper prints from the eighteen-fifties and -sixties: streets and farmyards in the town of Barbizon, and exquisite, atmospheric views of the nearby Fontainebleau Forest. Through Jan. 12. . . . ¶ The cynosure of a large exhibition surveying the career of the Scottish architect and designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928) must certainly be the restored Ladies' Luncheon Room from Miss Cranston's Ingram Street Tea Rooms, in Glasgow. Through Feb. 16. . . . ¶ "Queen Nefertiti and the Royal Women" presents narrative reliefs and sculptures from Egypt's Amarna period (1353-1336 B.C.). Through Feb. 2. A complementary reinstallation of sculptures, reliefs, and other objects is on view in the Amarna Galleries. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—The Jasper Johns retrospective features two hundred and twenty-five works—paintings, drawings, prints, and sculptures—and naturally includes a few flags, targets, numerals, and cross-hatch patterns. Through Jan. 21. (A show of Johns's print work since 1960 is at Castelli, 578 Broadway, through Dec. 14.) . . . ¶ Two installations by the Toronto art collective General Idea: "One Day of AZT" (1991), a set of five human-size fibreglass-and-vinyl pills, on the floor; and "One Year of AZT" (1991), three hundred and sixty-five sets of pills, arranged in months, on the walls. Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ Denise Marika's installation, "More Weight," features a video loop of nude figures projected onto a large rectangular metallic structure with layers of pink felt in the center. Through Jan. 26. . . . ¶ "Antonin Artaud: Works on Paper." Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ "New Photography 12" features work by Richard Billingham, Thomas Demand, Osamu Kanemura, Sophie Ristelhueber, Georgina Starr, and Wolfgang Tillmans. Through Feb. 4. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Ellsworth Kelly," a large survey of the artist's paintings, sculptures, works on paper, and photographs. Through Jan. 19. (For more Kelly, see Galleries—Chelsea.) (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Making Mischief," an excellent exhibition chronicling the Dada invasion of New York, from the Great War through the early twenties. Chief among its attractions is a significant selection of pieces by Marcel Duchamp—many of his most important works, including a painstaking reconstruction (recently made by Swedish scholars) of his masterpiece "The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even," also known as the "Large Glass." As often happens at the Whitney, some American artists have been shoehorned into an exhibit they have no business in. Still, the material is fascinating and very well presented. Louise and Walter Arensberg's salon has been reconstructed with a full-size photographic mural and many of the original paintings (by Cézanne, Duchamp, Braque, and others) hanging in their proper places. Through Feb. 23. . . . ¶ "I'll Be Your Mirror," a retrospective of Nan Goldin's disturbing photographs of the gritty, glamorous downtown life. Through Jan. 5. (A concurrent show of Goldin's pictures of children is at Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St., through Dec. 21.) . . . ¶ "Views from Abroad: European Perspectives on American Art 2." Through Jan. 5. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—An exhibit of the Codex Leicester, Leonardo's manuscript on such scientific subjects as hydrodynamics and astronomy. Through Jan. 1. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—The museum's extensive Chinese collection has handsome new quarters in which a a careful, lucid presentation offers a broad look at the art of the Middle Kingdom, from Neolithic stone carvings to blue-and-white ceramics of the late Ch'ing dynasty. . . . ¶ "In the Light of Italy: Corot and Early Open-Air Painting," an exquisite exhibition of oil sketches which makes a marvellous pendant to the big Corot show at the Met. Through Jan. 12. . . . ¶ "Photography in Latin America: A Spiritual Journey." Through Jan. 19. . . . ¶ "MINE," a sculptural installation by Rona Pondick. Through Jan. 4. . . . ¶ "The Evidence of Things Not Seen: Drawings by Glenn Ligon." Through Jan. 19. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Contemporary Art in Asia: Traditions/Tensions." The best work in this superb show manages to avoid mimicking the vernacular of Western modernism and postmodernism by drawing upon traditional forms. Through Jan. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.) . . . **NOTE:** The exhibition extends to N.Y.U.'s Grey Art Gallery (100 Washington Sq. E.; open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 6:30; Wednesdays, 11:30 to 8:30; Saturdays, 11 to 5; through Dec. 23) and to the Queens Museum of Art (Flushing Meadows–Corona Park; open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5; through Jan. 5).

MUSEUM FOR AFRICAN ART, 593 Broadway, between Houston and Prince Sts.—"Art of the Baga" features drums, masks, costumes, and other objects made by the Baga inhabitants of Guinea, in West Africa. Through Jan. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5:30; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 6.)

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National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Powerful Expressions: Recent American Drawings" includes five works each by fifteen artists, among them Jim Dine, Sidney Goodman, R. B. Kitaj, Susan Rothenberg, Jasper Johns, and Elizabeth Murray. Through Jan. 5. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

National Museum of the American Indian, 1 Bowling Green—"Woven by the Grandmothers," a display of nineteenth-century Navajo textiles from the museum's collection. Through Jan. 8. . . . ¶ Thirty-eight contemporary Navajo rugs and tapestries are on view, from the collection of the Denver Art Museum. Through Jan. 8. (Open daily, 10 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

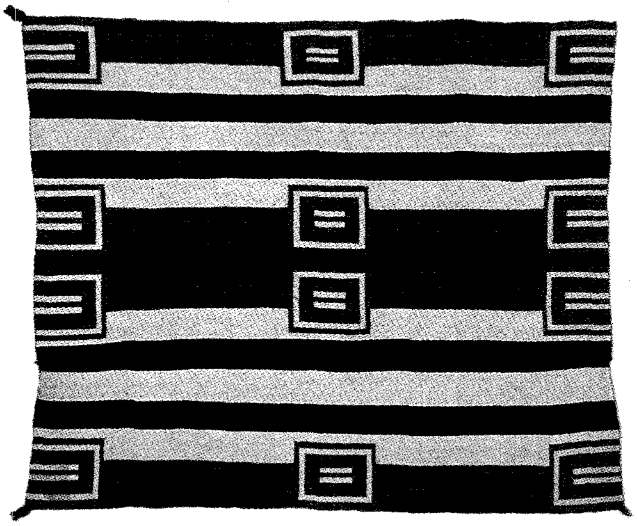
The New Museum, 583 Broadway, between Houston and Prince Sts.—"Carolee Schneemann: Up to and Including Her Limits," a retrospective of performances and body-based art works captured in the form of films, videos, drawings, notes, and other mediums. Through Jan. 26. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6; Saturday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, uptown and downtown galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6; Chelsea galleries are generally closed Tuesdays and open Sundays.)

Romare Bearden (1911-88)—Works in many mediums—silk screens, lithographs, watercolors, oils on paper, and, mostly, collages—which explore the world of the Old South with funky humor and deep humanity. The best pieces are extravagant scenes of the artist's home, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, among them a series of collages depicting blues musicians jamming after a day of work in the fields. Through Dec. 14. (ACA, 41 E. 57th St.)

Eric Fischl—The artist takes his competent, harmless brand of surrealism into the realm of imagined Italian church interiors, where mildly incongruous things are going on. In "Once Where We Looked to Put Down Our Dead," a Boris Karloff-like brute carries a limp maiden through a chapel; in "Anger, Remorse, Fear, or Incontinence," a man stands in a dark crypt in front of a yellow puddle. "Confessions of a Mafia Don" introduces a note of Scorsesean immediacy, with the priest swirling across the foreground as the confessed sinner skulks away between the pillars. Through Dec. 21. (Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)



"Woven by the Grandmothers," at the National Museum of the American Indian.

Donald Roller Wilson—Amusing paintings of animals in fancy dress, doing strange and wonderful things. Wilson is skilled, even if his surrealistic vision isn't exactly deep and his whimsy is forced at times. Through Dec. 10. (Wright, 41 E. 57th St.)

"New World Orders"—A fascinating, scholarly exhibition devoted to a weird genre of racist painting known as *casta* (Spanish for "caste"), which depicted every possible combination of intermingling between Spaniards, Indians, and African slaves in the Latin-American colonies. Each scene presents a man and a woman of different races with their offspring, and an ornate caption along the lines of "*De negro y española sale mulato*" ("From a black man and a Spanish woman comes a mulatto"). Though some of the classifications are fanciful or horrifying (the child of a black and an Indian was called a *lobo*—"wolf"), Mexican and Peruvian artists depicted their subjects with great reverence and affection. *Casta* paintings are among the few secular art works of the era, providing intimate glimpses of domestic interiors and of the colonial economy in a fresh and colorful naïve style. Through Dec. 22. (Americas Society, 680 Park Ave., at 68th St. Open daily, except Mondays, 12 to 6.)

"The Viennese Line: Art & Design Circa 1900"—Paintings and decorative works by artists associated with the Vienna Secession and the Wiener Werkstätte, including Klimt, Kokoschka, Schiele, Moser, Löffler, and Peche. Through Jan. 4. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

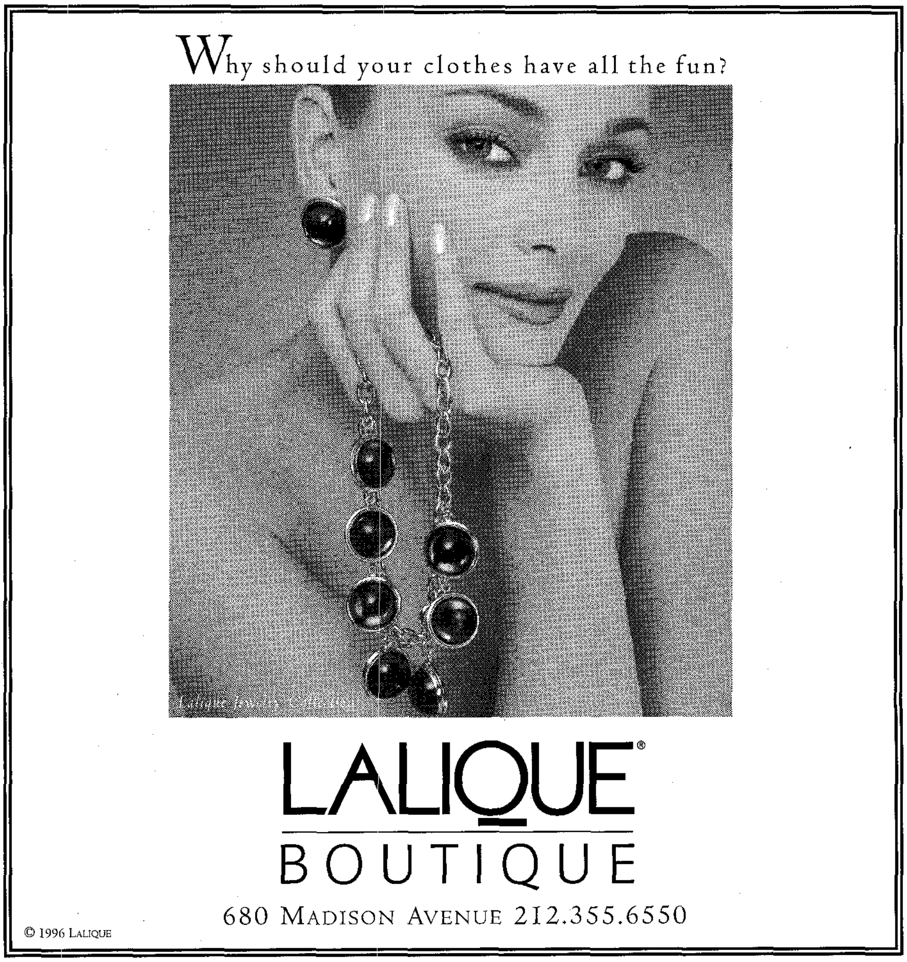
"The Subverted Object"—Dada and friends, by such diverse practitioners as Man Ray, Meret Oppenheim, Arman, Marcel Broodthaers, Ed Kienholz, Rebecca Horn, Dieter Rot, Richard Pettibone, and Tom Sachs. Through Jan. 4. (Ubu, 16 E. 78th St.)

"Man Ray at the Rue Férou"—A selection of works—drawings, collages, *cliché-verres*, paintings, photographs, and objects—made by the artist between 1951 and 1976 at his Paris studio. Through Jan. 4. (Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St.)

Short List—**JOE ANDOE,** Helman, 20 W. 57th St. Through Dec. 14. . . . **IRENE BUSZKO,** Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. Through Dec. 28. . . . **ROBERT DE NIRO,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Through Dec. 28. . . . **ANDY GOLDSWORTHY,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. Through Jan. 4. . . . **JÖRG IMMENDORF,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. Open Mondays; through Jan. 11. . . . **ALEX KATZ,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. Through Jan. 4. . . . **REGINALD MARSH,** DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through Dec. 28. . . . **JAMES B. MOORE,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. Through Dec. 21. . . . **ROBERT MOTHERWELL,** Long, 24 W. 57th St. Through Jan. 4. . . . **ALFONSO OSSORIO** and **FEDERICO CASTELLON,** Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. Both shows through Jan. 18. . . . **ARNALDO ROCHE,** Adams, at its new address, 41 W. 57th St. Through Dec. 21. . . . **GRETCHEN DOW SIMPSON,** Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. Through Jan. 4. . . . **LEON POLK SMITH,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Through Jan. 25. . . . **SUSAN SOLANO,** McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through Jan. 14. . . . **ZAO WOU-KI,** Krugier, 41 E. 57th St. Through Jan. 20.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Gary Hill—Large-scale video installations. The most impressive, "Viewer," is a projected lineup of twenty-odd men, their approximately life-size figures contrasting sharply with the black background; initially they seem motionless, but one gradually becomes aware of slight movements, shifts in posture, facial tics. The lineup suggests a police procedure, but the impassive stolidity of the men is implicitly confrontational. Through Dec. 21. (Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. Open Tuesdays, closed Sundays.)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Stephen Mueller—Candy-colored psychedelia for die-hard enthusiasts of abstract painting. Mueller deftly creates dense, atmospheric clouds of luxuriant hues overlaid with more color in the form of crisp circles and ellipses that introduce a modest visual tension to otherwise laid-back pictures. The artist wants to convey a mystical feeling, but these works are just as well appreciated as late examples of color-field painting. Through Dec. 11. (Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Tuesdays, closed Sundays.)

"Open Secrets: Seventy Pictures on Paper, 1815 to the Present"—An eclectic group of photographs and works on paper by canonical masters (Degas, Picasso, Matisse, Atget, Stieglitz, etc.) and by less familiar yet often eccentric and fascinating figures. Among the latter are Mrs. Ada Deane's 1931 "spirit image," a gelatin-silver print showing a cluster of faces hovering in an ectoplasmic cloud, and Frederick Sommer's 1939 photograph "Chicken," in which the head and some innards of the animal in question have been artfully arrayed on a grimy white background. There is no real agenda to the show other than the pleasure of connoisseurship, and in that respect it succeeds very well. Through Dec. 28. (Marks, in its second Chelsea space, at 523 W. 24th St. Open Tuesdays; closed Sundays.)

Short List—**ELLSWORTH KELLY**, Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. Closed Wednesdays; opens at noon; through Jan. 19. . . . **ULF ROLLOF**, Morris Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. Through Jan. 12. . . . **WILLIAM WOOD**, Kirkland, 504 W. 22nd St. Opens Sundays at noon; through Jan. 26.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Bruce Nauman—Two shows. At Castelli, white bronze sculptures of clasping hands, some in ordinary positions, others contorted into bizarre, quasi-surrealistic formations—Conceptualist in their bent (the hands represent the success or failure of various modes of communication), but highly aestheticized, too. The sculptures are paired with an unusually subdued if subtly discordant video. The show at Sperone Westwater pushes this discordance further, although it's far less headache-inducing than many of the artist's recent installations. Two video works, "World Peace (Projected)" and "World Peace (Received)," engage performers reciting permutations of the phrase "I'll talk, you'll listen," their intonations varying from dictatorial to cajoling. Clearly, Nauman doesn't think world peace (or clear communication) is around the bend. Both shows through Dec. 14. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway; Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

"Plains Indian Drawings, 1865-1935"—A large exhibition of ledger drawings—works made on paper from bound books appropriated from white traders and officers—by artists from the Lakota, Cheyenne, Kiowa, and Arapaho tribes. Through Dec. 21. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**MARK BENNETT** and **LESLIE BRACK**, Keenan, 494 Broadway. Both shows through Dec. 21. . . . **DEBORAH BUTTERFIELD**, Thorp, 103 Prince St. Through Jan. 18. . . . **ROBERT COLESCOTT**, Kind, 136 Greene St. Through Jan. 4. . . . **FRANK DEGEN**, Leslie-Lohman, 127 Prince St. Opens at 1; through Dec. 21. . . . **ROCHELLE FEINSTEIN** and **CHAKAIA BOOKER**, Protetch, 560 Broadway. Both shows through Dec. 7. . . . **ROBERT HECKES**, Postmasters, 80 Greene St. Through Dec. 21. . . . **LESLIE LERNER**, Rosenberg and Kaufman, 115 Wooster St. Through Jan. 4. . . . **MARI LYONS**, First Street Gallery, 560 Broadway. Through Dec. 7. . . . **GORDON MATTA-CLARK**, Fung, 537 Broadway. Through Dec. 14. . . . **YASUMASA MORIMURA**, Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. Through Jan. 4. . . . **MARTIN MULL**, Beitzel, 102 Prince St. Through Dec. 21. . . . **RICHARD PETTIBONE**, Marcus, 578 Broadway. Through Dec. 21. . . . **ADRIAN PIPER** and **SETON SMITH**, Weber, 142 Greene St. Both shows through Dec. 21. . . . **JONATHAN SELIGER**, Bravin Post Lee, 80 Mercer St. Through Dec. 21. . . . **RICHARD SERRA**, Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. Through Dec. 14. . . . **ANNE WALSH**, Kaplan, 48 Greene St. Through Dec. 14. . . . **LESLIE WAYNE**, Shainman, 560 Broadway. Through Dec. 21.

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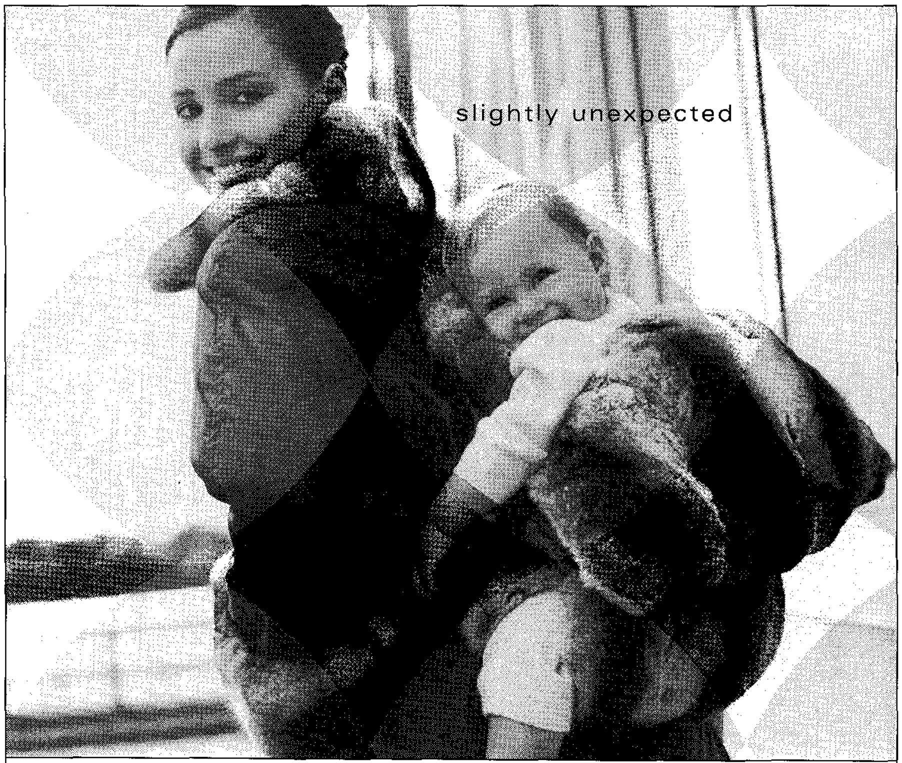

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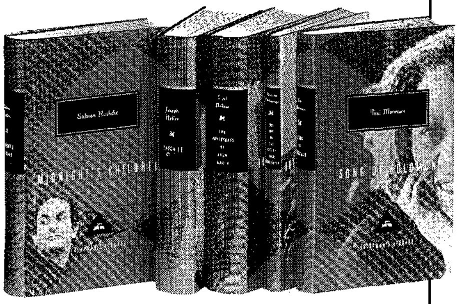

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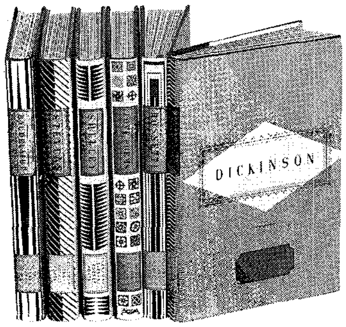

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Petah Coyne / Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-79)—Eighteen black-and-white prints by the sculptor, from four series: "Monks," "Piñata," "Carnival," and "Fourth of July, 1995." / Original albumen prints of well-known portraits (including Mrs. Herbert Duckworth and Sir John Herschel), along with a group of allegorical studies. Both shows through Dec. 28. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

Lynn Davis—The photographer's latest explorations—in earlier work she's captured icebergs, pyramids, and Southeast Asian temples—give us wildly handsome portraits of ancient ruins gracing the deserts of the Near East. Solid masses of brick and stone (crumbling minarets, columns, a Syrian fortress) stand defiantly at the center of each selenium-toned silver print, surrounded by equally impressive volumes of air, clouds, and sunlight. Two magical pictures show glimpses of late-Roman façades carved directly into mountainsides in Jordan's legendary rock city of Petra, and the gallery will happily show you a bound volume of this series with more exquisite views of the site. Through Jan. 4. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

Lisette Model (1901-83) / **Diane Arbus** (1923-71)—Well-known and virtually unknown vintage prints of vacationers on the Riviera, residents of the Lower East Side, and windows of New York storefronts. / "A Box of Ten Photographs," selected by Arbus (who was a student of Model's), includes some of her best-known portraits. Both shows through Jan. 11. (Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

John Waters—In "Director's Cut," Waters's second New York gallery show, he continues exploring favorite topics and personalities (crime, transvestism, Catholicism, pornography, William Castle, Dorothy Malone, etc.) in a series of humorous, perverse, and quite elegant photomontages. The subject matter may be schlock, but the formal vocabulary suggests affinities with such heavy hitters as John Baldessari, Mike Kelley, and Richard Prince. Through Dec. 7. (American Fine Arts, 22 Wooster St.)

Margaret Watkins (1884-1969)—A gentle wit and confidence inform all these vintage prints from the twenties and early thirties. In "The Kitchen Sink," Watkins turns a quotidian basinful of dirty dishes into a delightfully loose melody. The warm-toned "Domestic Symphony" is a masterful marriage of off-center composition (it was deemed radical) with the delicate textures of porcelain, linen, and eggshells. Through Jan. 4. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

"Pictorialism Into Modernism: The Clarence H. White School of Photography"—In courses at his own school, at Columbia University, and elsewhere, White (1871-1925) taught his students, the majority of them women, to cultivate "a sense of the beautiful." This show of more than a hundred works by his students and colleagues attests to their success. Laura Gilpin found ethereal beauty in Bryce Canyon, shown in soft focus under patchy cloud cover. Stella F. Simon found formal beauty in the corner of a room at the school's Harlem address. Paul Outerbridge, Jr., found slick beauty in a plate of cheese and crackers. Through Jan. 12. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

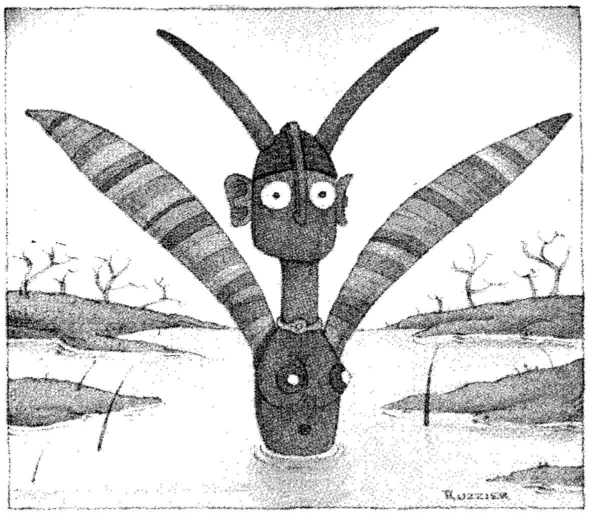
"Women of the Clarence White School"—In the beginning (ca. 1914), female students outnumbered males two to one. On view here are works by Doris Ulmann, Anne W. Brigman, Margaret Watkins, Margaret Bourke-White, Dorothea Lange, and others. Through Jan. 18. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"Roadworks," a large selection of black-and-white prints by Linda McCartney. Through Feb. 9. . . . ¶ "All Zones Off Peak: Photographs of Liverpool by Tom Wood." Through Feb. 9. . . . ¶ "A Celebration of 25 Years of Light Gallery." Through Feb. 9. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**ansel adams,** Danziger, 130 Prince St. Through Jan. 11. . . . **juan carlos alom,**

Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. Through Feb. 1. . . . **MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE,** SoHo Triad Fine Arts, 107 Grand St. Open daily; through Dec. 8. . . . **ELLEN CAREY,** Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St. Through Dec. 21. . . . **LYNNE COHEN,** P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway. Through Dec. 21. . . . **MILES COOLIDGE,** Kaplan, 48 Greene St. Through Dec. 14. . . . **MITCH EPSTEIN** and **VERA LUTTER,** Wooster Gardens, 558 Broadway. Both shows through Dec. 28. . . . **JERALD FRAMPTON,** Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. Open Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8; Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6; through Dec. 22. . . . **LYNN GEESAMAN** and **EUGÈNE ATGET,** Richardson, 560 Broadway. Through Jan. 11. . . . **NAN GOLDIN,** Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. Through Dec. 21. . . . **MARTIN PARR,** Borden, 560 Broadway. Through Dec. 31. . . . **FAWN POTASH,** Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St. Through Jan. 18. . . . **MATTHIEU RICARD,** Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. Through Dec. 28. . . . **LUCAS SAMARAS,** Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. Through Dec. 14. . . . **ALEX WEBB,** Leica, 670 Broadway. Opens Saturdays at noon; through Dec. 7.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Brooklyn Museum.)



"Art of the Baga," at the Museum for African Art.

SERGIO RUZZIER

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall is 247-7800, and for the Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949.)

HOLIDAY CONCERTS

Handel's "Messiah"—Kent Tritle leads the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola Choir and Orchestra, with soloists. (Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520. Dec. 5 at 7:30.)

St. Patrick's Cathedral Chapel Choir—Performing Daniel Pinkham's "Advent Cantata," Stephen Paulus's "Four Jesu Carols," and Bruce Saylor's "Star Song," with John-Michael Caprio directing. (Lady Chapel, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Fifth Ave. at 51st St. 753-2261. Dec. 5 at 7:30.)

"Amahl and the Night Visitors"—Menotti's Christmas opera, staged by the Little Orchestra Society. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 7 at 11, 1, and 3. For information about tickets, call 704-2100. . . . ¶ Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Dec. 8 at 3. No tickets necessary for this performance.)

Chanticleer—The men's a-cappella ensemble sings works by Lasso, Holst, and others, as well as traditional carols, in four performances at the Metropolitan Museum. (Temple of Dendur. Dec. 7 at 6:30 and 8:30. . . . ¶ Medieval Sculpture Hall. Dec. 8 at 6:30 and 8:30.)

I Cantori di New York—Mark Shapiro directs Poulenc's "Quatre Motets pour Noël," Hugo Distler's "Weihnachtsgeschichte," and Frank Martin's Mass for Double Chorus. (Calvary Episcopal Church, Park Ave. S. at 21st St. 439-4758. Dec. 7 at 8.)

Waverly Consort—The early-music group offers a wide-ranging Christmas program. (Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park. 650-2290. Dec. 8 at 1 and 3.)

Manhattan Virtuosi—The newly founded chamber orchestra performs Vivaldi's "Winter" Concerto (from "The Four Seasons") and Corelli's "Christmas" Concerto, among other works. Marc Cerri conducts. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, 41 Cooper Sq. 353-4195. Dec. 8 at 3.)

BachWorks—Advent cantatas by Bach ("Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland") and Buxtehude ("Befiehl dem Engel, dass er komm") are the centerpiece of a program directed by Richard Erickson. (St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 315 W. 22nd St. Dec. 8 at 5. Tickets at the door.)

"Judas Maccabaeus"—Handel's setting of the Hanukkah story, performed by the Brooklyn Philharmonia Chorus and the Gotham Chamber Orchestra, Douglas March directing. (St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church, Sixth Ave. at Park Pl., Brooklyn. 718-756-8664. Dec. 8 at 5.)

Choral Symphony Society and Cantata Singers—David Labovitz directs the chorus, orchestra, and soloists in all six cantatas of Bach's "Christmas Oratorio." (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Dec. 8 at 7. Admission by contribution.)

Westminster Choirs—The forty-voice Westminster Choir and the one-hundred-and-seventy-five-voice Westminster Symphonic Choir, directed by Joseph Flummerfelt, perform their annual Christmas concert, which this year includes Poulenc's Gloria, Mozart's "Vesperae Solennes de Confessore," and Schoenberg's "Friede auf Erden," in addition to traditional selections of the season. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 10 at 8.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**CARMEN,** with Angela Gheorghiu, Denyce Graves, Luis Lima, and Gino Quilico; conducted by James Levine. (Dec. 4 at 8 and Dec. 7 at 1:30.) . . . **A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM,** by Britten, with Sylvia McNair, Nancy Gustafson, Jane Bunnell, Jochen Kowalski, Kurt Streit, Rodney Gilfry, and Peter Rose; David Atherton. (Dec. 5 at 7:30.) . . . **COSÌ FAN TUTTE,** with Wendy Nielsen, Jane Bunnell, Marie McLaughlin, Richard Croft, Dwayne Croft, and Richard Stilwell; Mr. Levine. (Dec. 6 at 8.) . . . **L'ELISIR D'AMORE,** with Andrea Rost, Richard Leech, Mr. Quilico, and Leo Nucci; Carlo Rizzi. (Dec. 7 and Dec. 10 at 8.) . . . **RIGOLETTO,** with Ruth Ann Swenson, Ramon Vargas, and Mr. Nucci; Mr. Rizzi. (Dec. 9 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

Handel's "Agrippina"—Final performances of the opera, with Dongsok Shin directing the Mannes Camerata. (Cloister Theatre, Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. Dec. 5-6 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 580-0210, ext. 228.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Kurt Masur conducts Bartók's Divertimento, Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Frank Peter Zimmermann), and Beethoven's Symphony No. 1. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Dec. 5-7 at 8 and Dec. 10 at 7:30.)

Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra—Lorin Maazel conducts his own "Music for Violoncello and Orchestra" (with Mstislav Rostropovich) and Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 4 at 8.)

ARTEK Ensemble—Gwendolyn Toth leads her period-instrument players in a program of seventeenth-century German music which

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to draw out the genius
in another.

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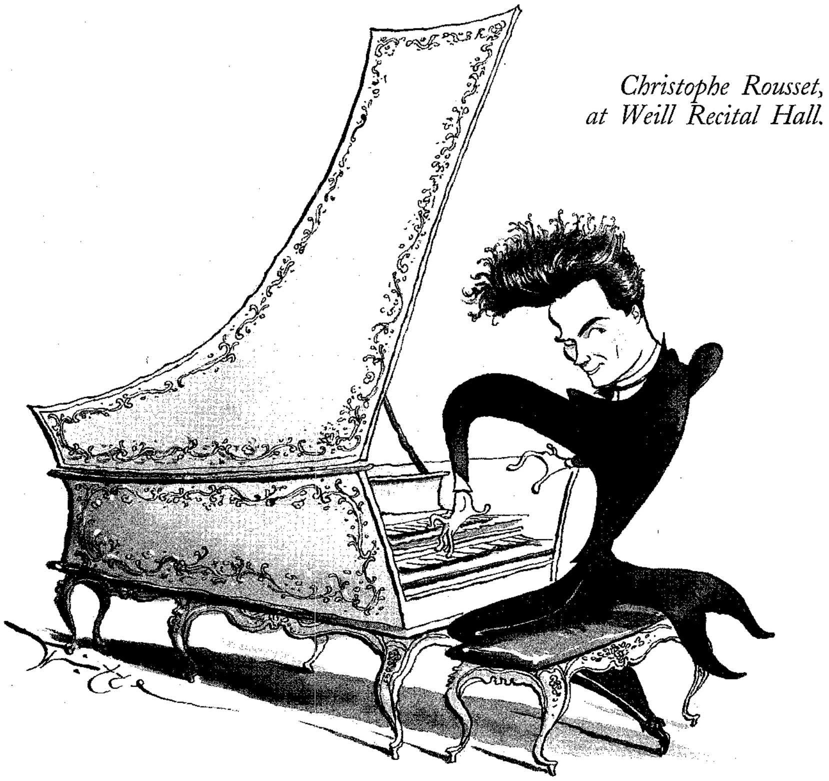
features the French cornetto player Jean Tubéry, who teaches that instrument at the Paris Conservatoire. The cornetto is a hybrid among musical instruments: its trumpetlike mouthpiece proclaims its relation to the brass family, but its wooden body, with finger holes resembling those of a recorder, makes it a woodwind from the neck down. It is wickedly difficult to play, which is a pity, since a great deal of glorious early- and mid-Baroque music—by the likes of Schütz, Buxtehude, Scheidt, Franz Tunder, and Johann Rosenmüller, all of whom are represented in this program—can't be realized properly without it. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. Dec. 6-7 at 8. For information about tickets, call 873-0473.)

Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra—Robert Spano conducts Louis Andriessen's "De Stijl," in addition to works by Frank Zappa and John Adams. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Dec. 6-7 at 8.)



Christophe Rousset, at Weill Recital Hall.

New York Madrigal Singers—Presenting an all-Byrd concert that includes his Mass in Four Voices, with seven Marian motets interspersed as the movements of the proper. (Church of Notre Dame, 405 W. 114th St. Dec. 8 at 2. Admission by contribution. . . ¶ St. Luke In-the-Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. Dec. 9 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

Met Orchestra—James Levine directs Verdi's Requiem, with soprano Renée Fleming, mezzo-soprano Florence Quivar, tenor Luciano Pavarotti, bass Samuel Ramey, and the Metropolitan Opera Chorus. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 8 at 3.)

RECITALS

Chamber Soirée—Pianist Yefim Bronfman anchors an evening of chamber music: Prokofiev's F-Minor Violin Sonata (with Isaac Stern) and Schumann's "Fantasiestücke" (Op. 73, with Lynn Harrell) and Piano Quintet (with violinist Joshua Bell and violist Lawrence Dutton rounding out the ensemble). (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Dec. 4 at 8.)

Balm in Gilead—Soprano Jessye Norman sings in and presides over a celebrity-filled evening to benefit her AIDS organization; with poet Maya Angelou, novelist Toni Morrison, actors Whoopi Goldberg and Anna Deavere Smith, dancer and choreographer Bill T. Jones, drummer Max Roach, and pop star Elton John. (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. Dec. 4 at 8. For information about tickets, call 888-225-6243.)

Bargemusic—Tenor Robert White is a rarity: in an era that values generalized vocal interchangeability, his timbre and his style are instantly identifiable. Though his repertoire ranges from medieval to contemporary, his special strength is interpreting light music (such as so-called parlor songs) in a way that conveys its out-of-fashion, heart-on-the-sleeve emotionalism without undercutting its sincerity. In this concert, he'll offer such chestnuts as Emilio de Curtis's "Carmela" and the Berceuse from Godard's "Jocelyn," as well as art songs by Strauss and Rachmaninoff, and he'll also be joined by violist Paul Neubauer and pianist Timothy Hester for works by Finzi, Adolf Busch, and Vaughan Williams (his "Four Hymns"). Completing the program are Bloch's Rhapsodie for Viola and Piano and Copland's "El Salón Mexico" (as arranged for solo piano by Bernstein). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. Dec. 5 at 7:30 and Dec. 8 at 4.)

Christophe Rousset—He's a double-threat darling of the early-music world, an enormously gifted harpsichordist who has also proved unusually adept as a conductor of French Baroque music (a skill he practices mostly with his own ensemble, Les Talens Lyriques). Two seasons ago in New York, Mr. Rousset joined William Christie (another harpsichordist turned conductor) for a recital of music for two harpsichords. Now he returns for his New York solo début, performing suites by four leading Baroque keyboard composers: Louis Couperin (in D Minor), Johann Jakob Froberger (his Twelfth, in C Major), Antoine Forqueray (his Fourth), and Rameau (arrangements from his *opéra-ballet* "Les Indes Galantes"). (Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 5 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Presenting the première of Chistopher Rouse's "Compline" for Flute, Clarinet, Harp, and String Quartet, as well as Fauré's G-Minor Piano Quartet and Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Cello and "Introduction and Allegro." (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Dec. 6 at 8 and Dec. 8 at 5.)

Pamela Frank and Peter Serkin—The violinist and the pianist offer sonatas by Bach (in E Major), Mozart (in G Major, K. 379), and Busoni (his Second), in addition to works by Takemitsu and Peter Lieberson. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Dec. 8 at 3.)

Cygnus Ensemble—Presenting an eightieth-birthday tribute to Milton Babbitt which includes the composer's "Dansi" for solo guitar (featuring David Starobin). (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Dec. 10 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

ALSO OF INTEREST

ST. LUKE'S CHAMBER ENSEMBLE. (Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 4 at 8.) . . . **FESTIVAL CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY.** (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Dec. 5 at 8.) . . . **ELIOT FISK:** Guitarist. (Metropolitan Museum. Dec. 6 at 8.) . . . **ARA MALIKIAN AND SEROUJ KRADJIAN:** Violinist and pianist. (Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 8 at 2.) . . . **NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC ENSEMBLES.** (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Dec. 8 at 3.) . . . **FLORENCE GOULD HALL CHAMBER PLAYERS.** (55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Dec. 8 at 3.) . . . **ORLI SHAHAM:** Pianist. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Dec. 8 at 3.) . . . **JUPITER SYMPHONY.** (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. Dec. 9 at 2 and 7 and Dec. 10 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.) . . . **STEVE REICH:** An evening of his music. (Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center. Dec. 9 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.) . . . **YURI KIM:** Pianist. (Mansfield Hotel, 12 W. 44th St. Dec. 9 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Georgian on My Mind—The American Friends of the Georgian Group host architectural scholar Donald Rattner's talk "The Georgian Tradition in the Twentieth Century" at the cozy Leash Club (41 E. 63rd St.) on Dec. 4 at 6:30. Under the energizing leadership of Lady Bradbury, and with the aid of a little Stilton and claret, the American Friends have been busy raising local awareness of both Stateside and British treasures—Washington Square town houses, country estates, neoclassical furnishings—from the Georgian period (1714-1837). Partisans of the era, including the equally dedicated Irish Georgian Society, have been known to rescue houses from certain peril, not to mention the ghastly menace of P.V.C. windows. (For reservations to lectures sponsored by the American Friends, call 861-3990. For information on meetings of the Irish contingent, call 759-7155.)

Readings—Dec. 6 at 7: Barry Hannah, Marilyn French, and Junot Díaz read from their work. (The Writer's Voice, West Side Y, 5 W. 63rd St. Tickets at the door.) . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 7: Short-story writers Dean Albarelli and Ken Foster read a story each. (Limbo, 47 Avenue A, at 3rd St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 7:30: William F. Buckley, Jr., cites a few sesquipedalian examples from his latest book, "The Right Word." (Barnes & Noble, 33 E. 17th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 8: Grace Paley and Wesley Brown read from their work. (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—Dec. 4 at 6: Kiss-and-tell columnist Candace Bushnell and her fellow *Observer* gossip Billy Norwich enumerate the twelve sins of the holidays. (Troy, 138 Greene St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 7: In conjunction with her retrospective at the New Museum, Carolee Schneemann looks back on her largely naked performance art. (583 Broadway. 219-1222.) . . . ¶ Dec. 5 at 8:30 A.M.: Publisher Harold Evans hosts a breakfast chat about Ralph Ellison, with Sylvia Erskine, Albert Murray, and David Remnick, among other guests. (Fred's, at Barneys, 10 E. 61st St. 940-7480.)

MICHAEL WITTE

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In Praise of...
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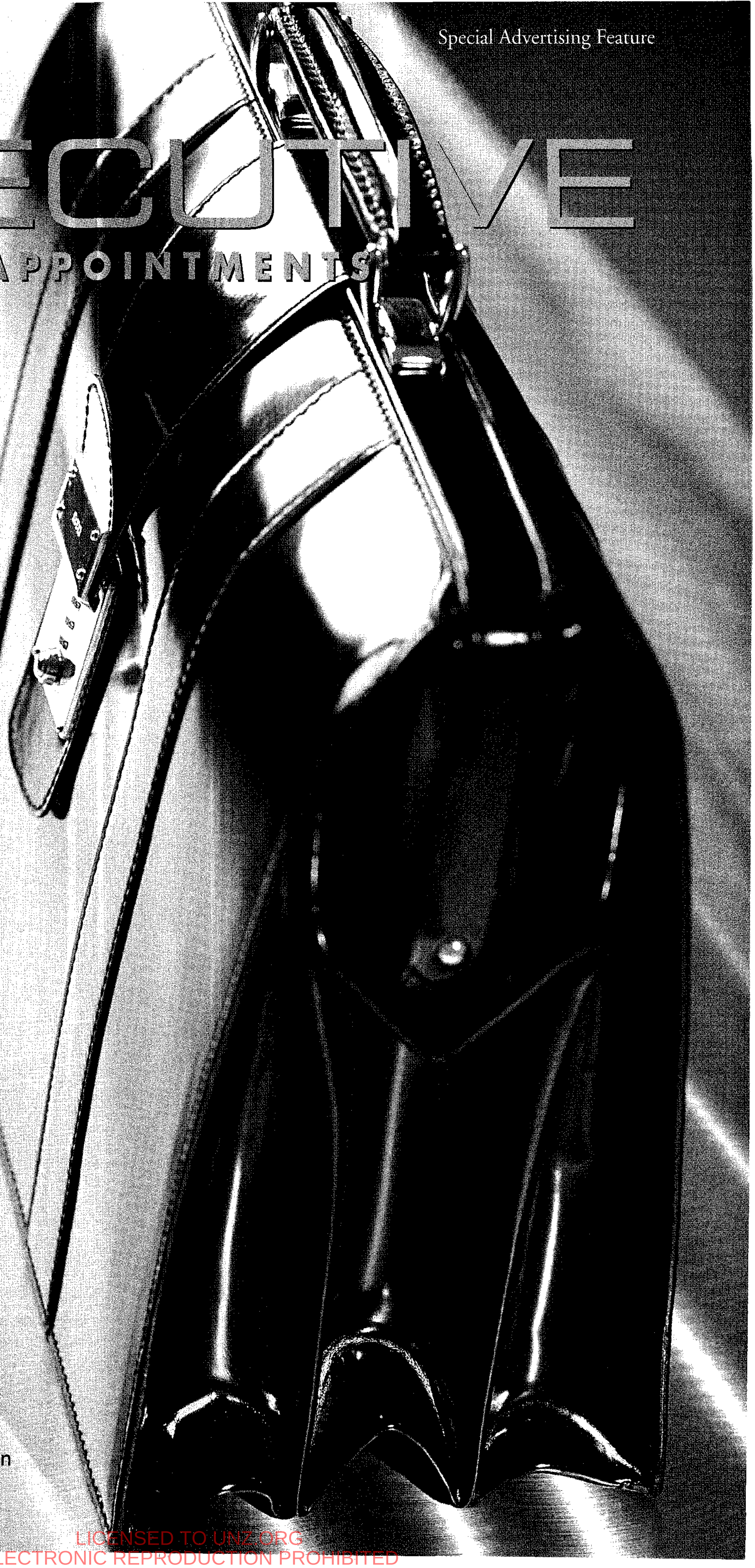


Woe be it for anyone to dispute the myriad advantages of the computer age. As we advance into the next millennium, knee-deep in digitization and random access memory, the PC, as it is commonly referred to, holds our lives in its hard drive, a hunk of plastic dominating desks where leather-bound card files once stood alongside matching pen-and-pencil sets, calendars, blotters and such. But one might ask what price the procession of pentium chips and other techno debris has had on individualism and personal style. Thumb through the plethora of personal computing magazines and catalogs and one thing is indisputable: Computers look pretty much, well, uniform.

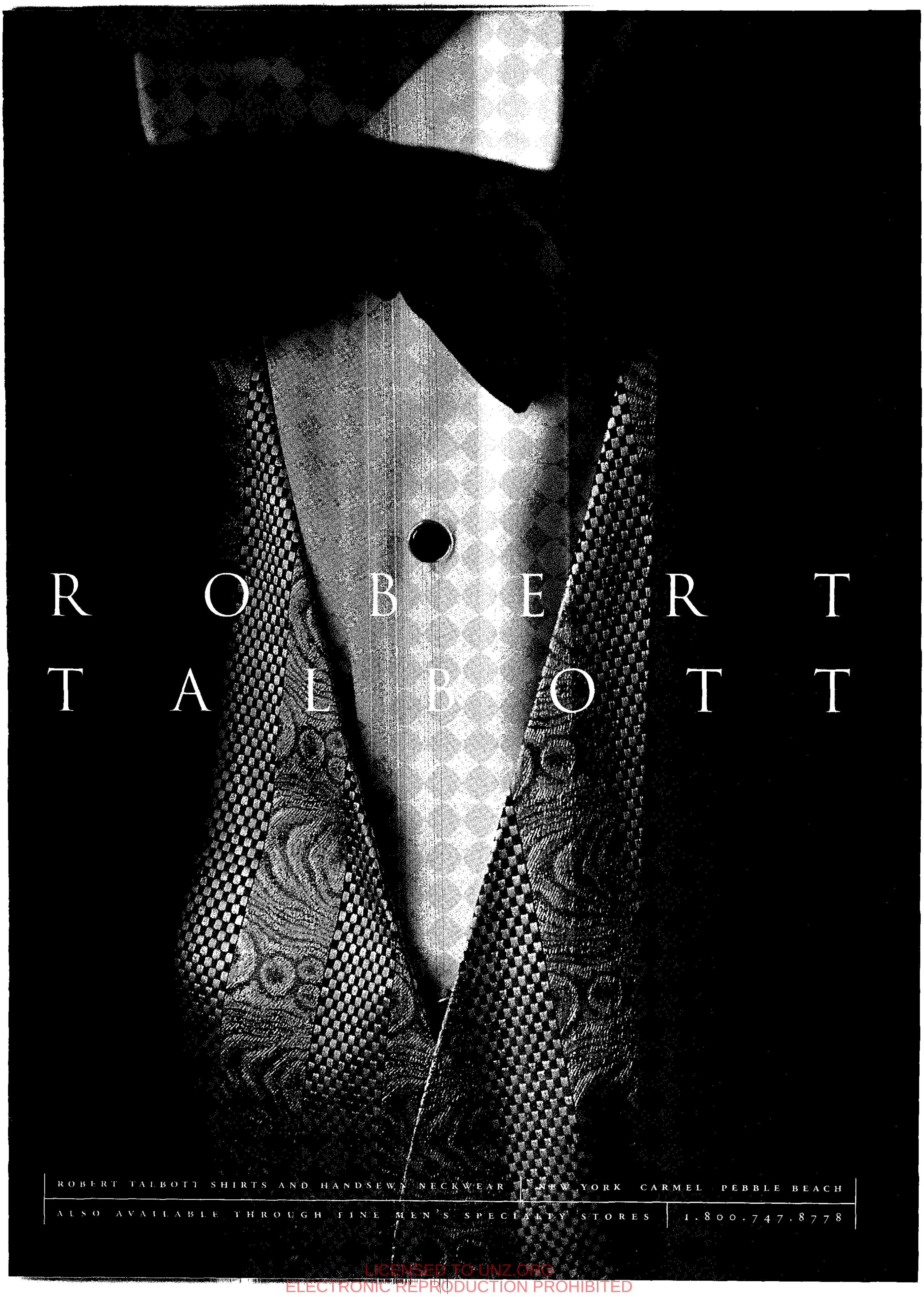
By Ralph DiGennaro
Photography by Peter Davidian

Even the most advanced models generally come in only one color, dull beige (or putty, if you want to get creative about it), and one material, plastic. Save for the literally dizzying array of screen savers, there is virtually nothing a computer can do to distinguish the successful executive's desktop, office, or personal style.

Fortunately, for those who place as much importance on panache as on printouts, handsome appointments and accessories that lend individuality to executive style abound. No need for a beautiful mahogany or rosewood desk to be dominated by a colorless PC when Montblanc turns out stunning accessories such as a lead crystal inkwell with a sterling silver cap and 23.5 karat gold-plated trim. Of course, an inkwell of this ilk requires a writing instrument of equal luxury, preferably the Solitaire, a sterling silver fountain pen that no executive worth his bottom line should be without. For the art of inking the deal and other business transactions, one might also consider a writing instrument from Montblanc's Limited Edition Writer's Series. The 1996 edition features a pen with a marbled barrel crafted from precious resin, named

Business Essential with Urban Style: (Cover) *Gucci's thoroughly modern attaché case in black Mastercalf.*

The Bottom Line: (This page) *Ink the deal with a Montblanc Limited Edition Writer's Series fountain pen, dipped in the company's sterling-capped lead crystal inkwell.*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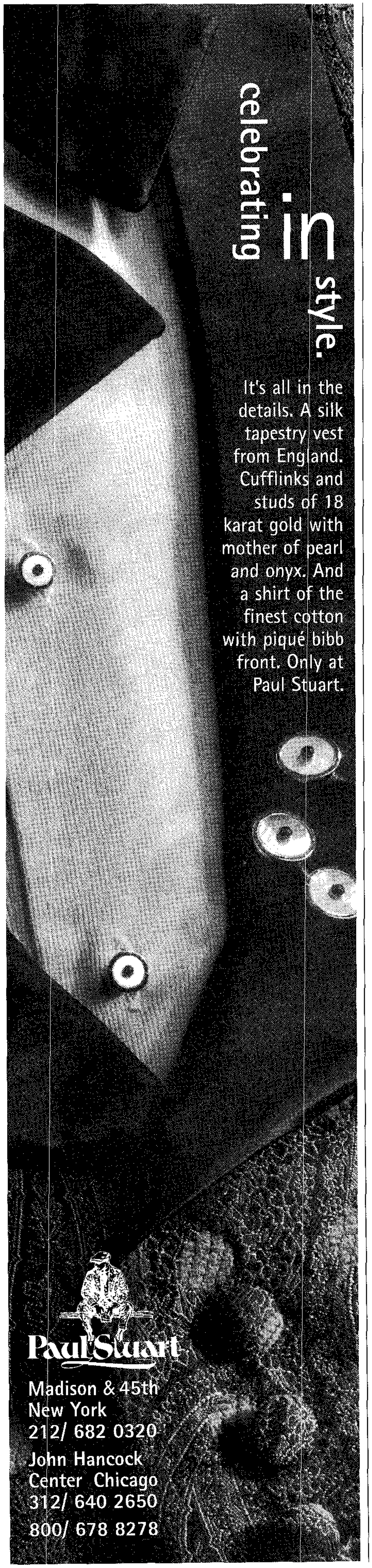

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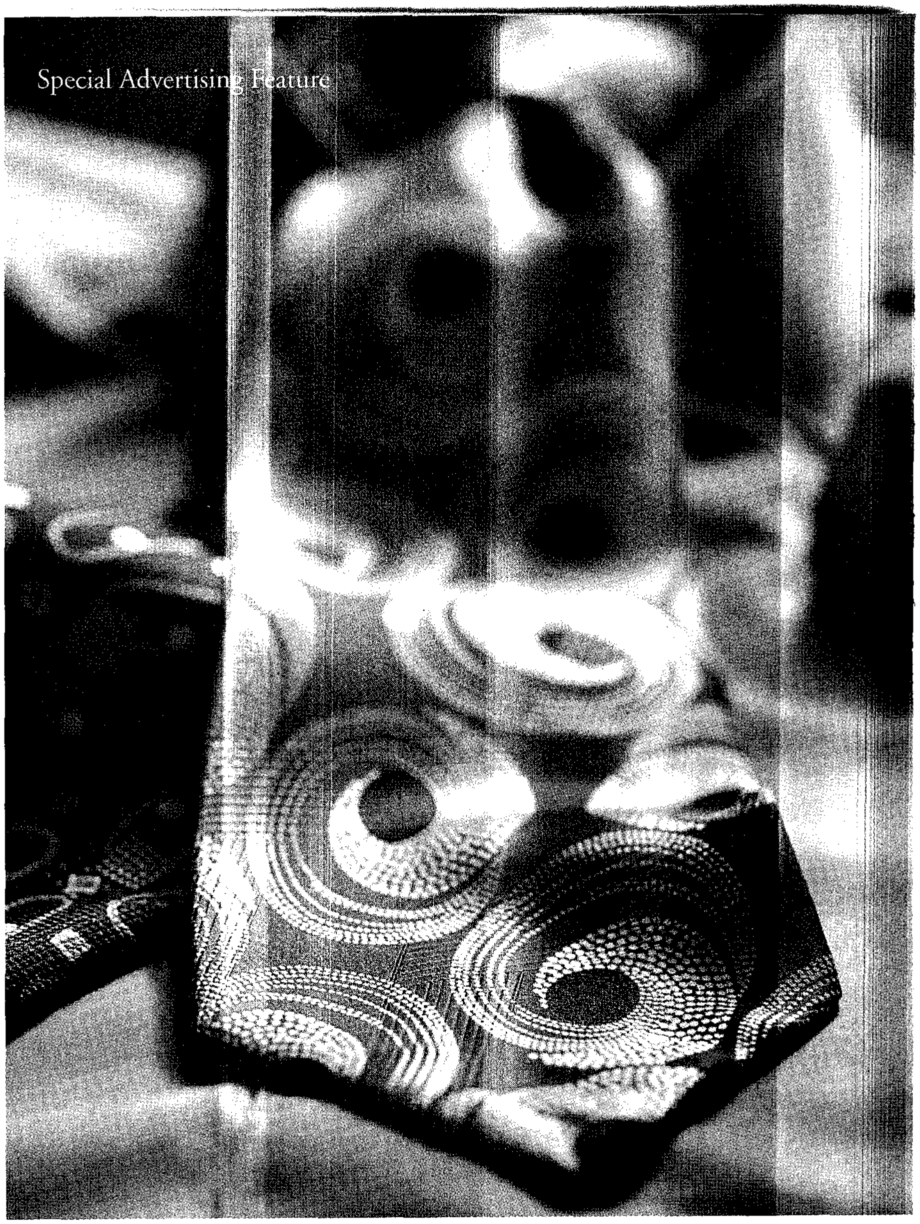
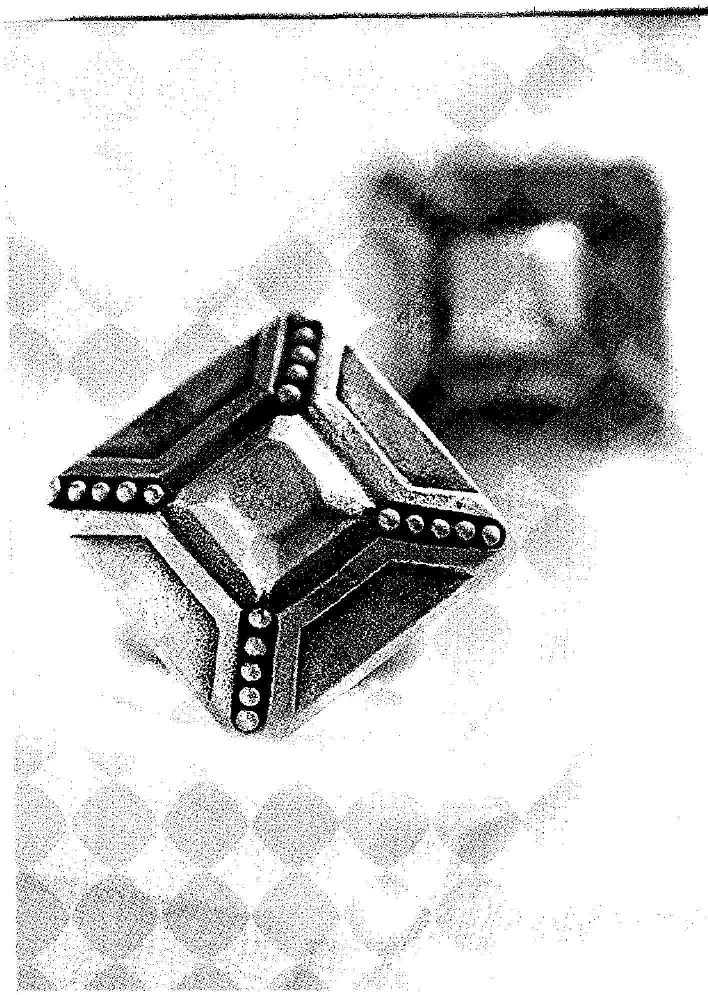


Silk Decrees: (Above) *Robert Talbott is one of the last companies still producing the unique, handmade "seven-fold" silk necktie.* ***Off the Cuff:*** (Next page) *Neckwear designer Bert Pulitzer is now turning out matte sterling cuff links inspired by ironwork scroll designs.*

for Alexandre Dumas, author of "The Three Musketeers" and "The Count Of Monte Cristo," whose characters were certainly no strangers to finery and flourishes.

An executive's sense of style can often be expressed even in the most functional of office accessories, with objects that render the executive suite that much sweeter. For those who enjoy the pleasures of fine, handmade cigars and often share a smoke with privileged business associates, a proper cigar ashtray with adequately sized notches at the rim is a necessity. Some of the best to be found anywhere hail from Davidoff, where there is an assortment of crystal ashtrays, handmade in France, that come in various shapes and sizes.

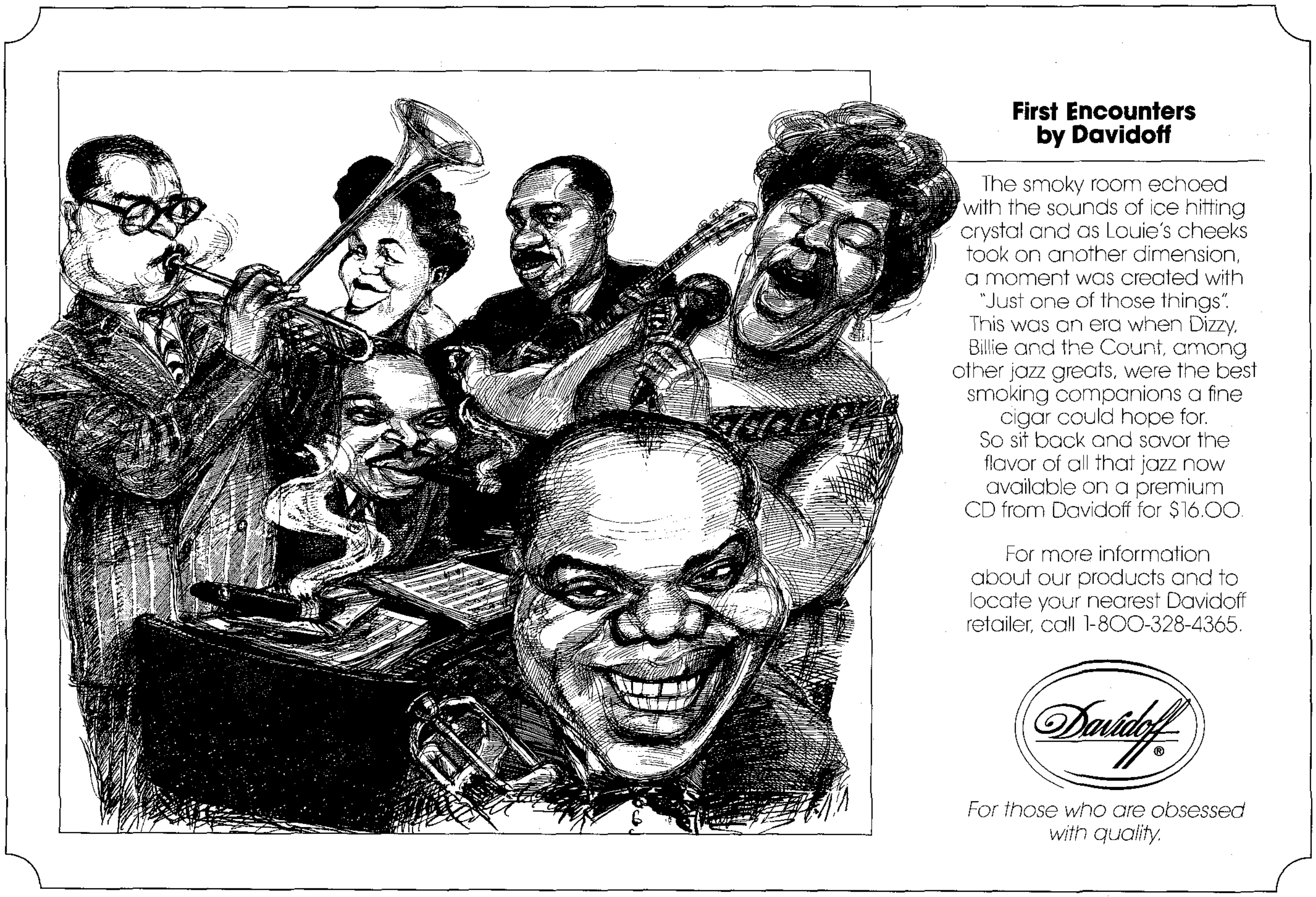
Whether inside the office or out, the style-conscious executive would do well to have his personal accessories reflect his own taste and individuality. The necktie, for example, is an integral part of the corporate uniform, yet the California-based company Robert Talbott has seen to it that an executive's tie can be as unique as the man. Continually turning out upscale handmade ties in fabrics rarely seen in the marketplace, Robert Talbott is the only remaining American manufacturer to offer "seven-fold" neckwear, created from weighty



Super Mogador silks. These are very special ties that dispense with the usual wool underlining, and are hand-folded seven times to add thickness. The result is a remarkably soft tie that easily slips into a perfect knot and drapes superbly. Much more expensive to produce for all the extra silk it requires, the seven-fold tie is meant for the most demanding and quality conscious executive who prides himself on his ability to master the well-knotted cravat.

No stranger to high quality, original neckwear is Bert Pulitzer, designer at the ten year old company XMI, which now produces men's ties, shirts, belts, and starting this fall, jewelry. Pulitzer has fashioned a collection of artful cuff links in sterling silver with a purposefully dulled finish to match his innovatively designed, deep-toned dress shirts. Many of Pultizer's new cuff link designs echo intricate ironwork motifs—an unusual source of inspiration for men's jewelry that is right in keeping with the designer's iconoclastic bent.

When it comes to uniformity, nothing underscores the lemminglike character of corporate life like the multitude of standard issue briefcases that businessmen everywhere can't seem to leave home without. Leave it to Gucci to reinvent the attaché for executives who move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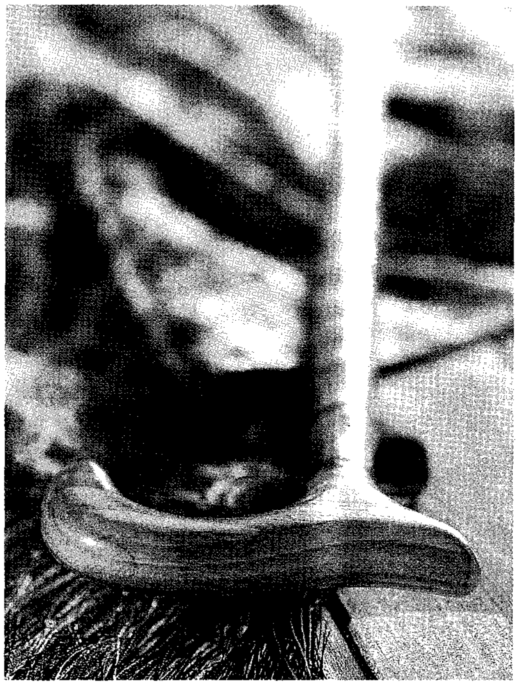

Crystal Clear: (Top) *The luxuries of enjoying a fine cigar include the proper ashtray such as Davidoff's lead crystal model, handmade in France.*

Stick Figure: (Left) *The finishing touch for a well-tailored suit is a bamboo walking stick from Paul Stuart.*

in modern circles. At once sleek and totally urban, Gucci works shiny black Mastercalf leather into an accordion-fold briefcase with sterling hardware and a built-in combination lock. Lined in pigskin, the Gucci case has inside compartments for organization and a zippered envelope in between for those top priority contracts and proposals. Masterful in its clean, detailed workmanship, the new Gucci briefcase conveys a powerful message as to who's the boss.

Finally, for the executive who prefers an element of swagger with his style, a hand-carved walking stick is the perfect accompaniment for in-town tweeds, a fur felt fedora, and a silk and cashmere fringed scarf tossed over the shoulder in devil-may-care nonchalance. Brits would consider an executive put together in this fashion as being "in good kit." In America, the look is right out of a Paul Stuart catalog. . .literally. ◆

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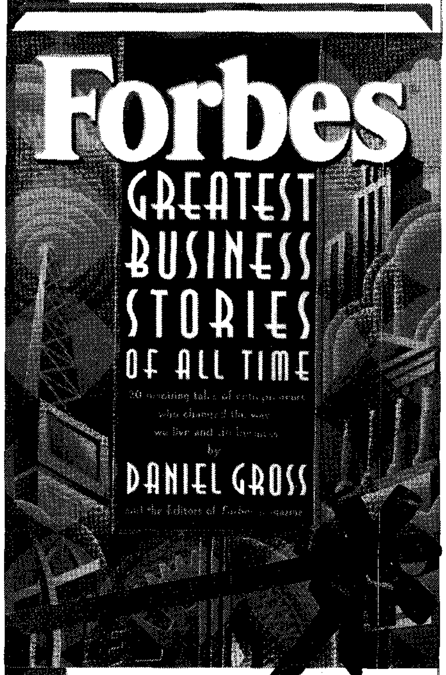

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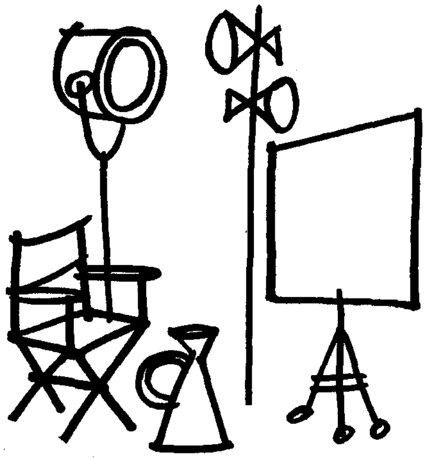

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Daylight—After an explosion seals a tunnel between Manhattan and New Jersey, Sylvester Stallone comes to the aid of the trapped victims, in a thriller directed by Rob Cohen. Opening Dec. 6. (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, National Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and 34th Street Showplace.)

Everyone Says I Love You—A musical written and directed by Woody Allen, set in Paris, Venice, and New York. Allen is also one of the stars, along with Alan Alda, Drew Barrymore, Lucas Haas, Goldie Hawn, Julia Roberts, and Tim Roth. Dec. 6-12. (Lincoln Square.)

Fire on the Mountain—A documentary by Beth and George Cage, about the United States Army's 10th Mountain Division and the achievements of its members during and after the Second World War. Opening Dec. 6. (Quad Cinema.)

Losing Chase—Kevin Bacon's study of a woman (Helen Mirren) dealing with the aftermath of her mental breakdown and with its effect on her son (Michael Yarmush), her husband (Beau Bridges), and their nanny (Kyra Sedgwick). Written by Anne Meredith. Opening Dec. 6. (Quad Cinema.)

The Substance of Fire—Daniel Sullivan directs Ron Rifkin, Timothy Hutton, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Tony Goldwyn in Jon Robin Baitz's adaptation of his 1991 drama, about a hardheaded publisher and his three children. Opening Dec. 6.

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 46.)

Beautiful Thing—An urban fairy tale, set in London, about first love between two sixteen-year-old boys (Glen Berry and Scott Neal). The movie is a mixed bag, but it has sweet performances and some wonderful moments; the director, Hettie Macdonald, films through rose-colored glasses that capture the humor and charm of the story but not the drama.—B.D. (Quad Cinema.)

Big Night—The actor Stanley Tucci co-wrote (with Joseph Tropiano), co-directed (with Campbell Scott), and co-stars (with Tony Shalhoub) in this elegant, leisurely low-budget comedy about a struggling Italian restaurant run by a pair of immigrant brothers. The unusually happy, relaxed ensemble includes Ian Holm, Isabella Rossellini, Minnie Driver, Allison Janney, and Campbell Scott. The big set piece—a lavish dinner in honor of the singer-bandleader Louis Prima—is a fitting climax to the movie's patient accumulation of savory and blissfully pointless delights: a convincing illustration of how keen pleasure for pleasure's sake can be.—T.R. (9/23/96) (Cinema 3, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.)

Bitter Sugar—A passively loyal young Cuban Communist (René Lavan) falls in love with a disaffected dancer (Mayté Vilán), and his faith in the Revolution topples like a bowling pin. The director, Leon Ichaso, tries hard to be contemporary (the lovers worry less about ideology than about getting kicked out of tourist-only hotels), but at this late date criticizing Castro's Cuba feels like shooting fish in a barrel. The pair does have chemistry, though, and, with his bedroom eyes and sweet, macho naïveté, Lavan (once a regular on "One Life to Live") is a discovery. In Spanish.—S.K. (Carnegie Hall Cinemas and Cinema 3rd Avenue.)

Breaking the Waves—The Danish director Lars von Trier tells the sad story of a devout young Scottish woman (Emily Watson) who becomes a whore in order to save the life of her critically ill husband (Stellan Skarsgård). Von Trier gives the highbrow audience precisely what it wanted in the boom years of the fifties and early sixties—nudity plus theology. The erotic-metaphysical hokum would be somewhat easier to take if the picture displayed anything resembling a genuine religious impulse.—T.R. (11/18/96) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

The Crucible—Arthur Miller has always maintained that his 1953 play about the Salem witchcraft trials was a cry of protest against the anti-Communist zealotry of the McCarthy era. The parallel between the actual witch-hunts of the seventeenth century and the metaphorical witch-hunts of the nineteen-fifties never seemed very strong, and in Nicholas Hytner's film version (which has a script by the playwright himself) it looks flimsier than ever. Hytner's florid, hyperbolic direction does, however, reveal the play as a characteristic product of its time—not so much in its social attitudes as in its sexual politics. The themes that come through most clearly here are fear of women and hatred of youth: the teen-age girls of Salem squeal and writhe, and the hero, John Proctor (Daniel Day-Lewis)—the manliest man in the colonies—swings from the gallows. The movie plays less like a stinging political manifesto than like one of those earnest exposé-style fifties movies in which gangs of hormone-crazed "juvenile delinquents" ran riot and terrorized the respectable folk. Also with Winona Ryder, Paul Scofield, Joan Allen, and Bruce Davison.—T.R. (12/2/96) (Lincoln Square.)

The English Patient—Written and directed by Anthony Minghella, from the novel by Michael Ondaatje, this long and searching movie tangles together a number of stories. First, there is an adulterous love affair between Almásy (Ralph Fiennes) and Katherine (Kristin Scott Thomas) which unfolds in the sands of North Africa before the outbreak of the Second World War. Then, as the war winds down, the badly burned Almásy is cared for in an abandoned Italian monastery by a French-Canadian nurse (Juliette Binoche), who has an affair with a Sikh soldier (Naveen Andrews). Among the other characters are the decent chaps who tried to befriend the frosty Almásy in the desert and the mysterious Caravaggio (Willem Dafoe), a scavenging thief who appears to know the secrets of Almásy's past. All these plot lines interweave and tauten right up to the unbearable romantic tension of the climax. The triumph of the film lies not just in the force and range of the performances—the crisp sweetness of Scott Thomas, say, versus the raw volatility of Binoche—but in Minghella's creation of an intimate epic: vast landscapes mingle with the minute details of desire, and the combination is transfixing.—A.L. (11/25/96) (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, and Village East Cinemas.)

The First Wives Club—Goldie Hawn, Bette Midler, and Diane Keaton, three of America's finest comic actresses, get together for the first time, and the best that Hollywood has to offer them is this loud empowerment comedy. The premise—old friends meet at a funeral and find that they have something in common: their husbands are leaving them for younger women—sounds like a fair taking-off point for some wicked comedy. But all that the scenarist, Robert Harling, can think of to follow it up with is a tepid revenge fantasy in which they bond and dole out justice to their cheating men. The director, Hugh Wilson, aims for harmless froth, and what he winds up with, as the hysteria level rises, is something brash and strident.—B.D. (Art Greenwich Twin and Embassy 4.)

101 Dalmatians—Glenn Close is the puppy-coveting Cruella DeVil in Stephen Herek's live-action remake of Disney's 1961 animated film. With Jeff Daniels, Joely Richardson, and Joan Plowright. Screenplay by John Hughes. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (86th Street East Twin, Gotham Cinema, Guild, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas.)

Hype!—A documentary directed by Doug Pray, chronicling Seattle's early-nineties pop-music scene. (State.)

Jingle All the Way—Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sinbad share the screen with Rita Wilson, Phil Hartman, and James Belushi in Brian Levant's comedy about Christmas shopping. Written by Randy Kornfield. (Baronet, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Olympia, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 34th St. East, and Waverly.)

Looking for Richard—Al Pacino, a self-confessed Shakespeare addict, has come up with a witty, two-tone movie about his obsession. Much of it is documentary—a number of loose, light riffs on the subject of "Richard III," with Pacino recruiting fellow-actors, famous directors, academics, and passing New Yorkers to discuss the play's mettle and morals. Every so often, without much ado, the comedy of discussion stops for excerpts from the tragedy itself, played dark and straight, with performances of surprising intensity from such stars as Alec Baldwin and Winona Ryder; Pacino is the haunted and unshaven king. The film, which is at once diverting and deeply concentrated, ends up, of course, telling us as much about Pacino as about Shakespeare.—A.L. (Reviewed 11/25/96 under Onward and Upward with the Arts.) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Michael Collins—The short life and lasting legend of the Irish freedom fighter Michael Collins (1890-1922), compressed into a vigorous movie by the writer and director Neil Jordan. Liam Neeson gives a hefty performance as the hero, but the film takes too much care insuring that we like and admire him, cooling the figure's hot temper and ignoring any sins of the flesh (let alone of the spirit) which he committed—he remains devoted to Kitty Kiernan (Julia Roberts). The strength of the movie resides mainly in the work of its cameraman, Chris Menges, who delivers a barrage of images as rousing and changeable as the fortunes of Collins himself. With Aidan Quinn, Stephen Rea, Alan Rickman, and Charles Dance.—A.L. (10/14/96) (Beekman and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Microcosmos—A revelatory documentary about insects. The directors, Claude Nuridsany and Marie Pérennou, who were trained as biologists, spent years designing cameras that would capture spiders, butterflies, beetles, and bees in their habitats as never before. There are no voice-overs, just close-ups of bugs; a few sequences surpass the most horrific science fiction, but a surprising number of the creatures are quite cute. The inventive, funny-ethereal score is by Bruno Coulais.—S.K. (Film Forum 3.)

The Mirror Has Two Faces—This bizarre romantic comedy, produced and directed by and starring Barbra Streisand, is an uncomfortable ugly-duckling story about a plain-Jane Columbia professor who has an epiphany, develops self-confidence, gets in shape, dyes her hair, and becomes a glamorous nineties siren. The affable Jeff Bridges (as a handsome colleague Streisand falls in love with), Lauren Bacall (in a snapping-turtle performance as her frosty mom), and Mimi Rogers (as her prettier, uptight sister), all generate real charm. So does Streisand—until her diva makeover. The movie's slide into a my-mother-never-told-me-I'm-beautiful gripe session is fascinating to watch; it's also embarrassingly trite.—B.D. (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, Village Theatre VII, and Ziegfeld.)

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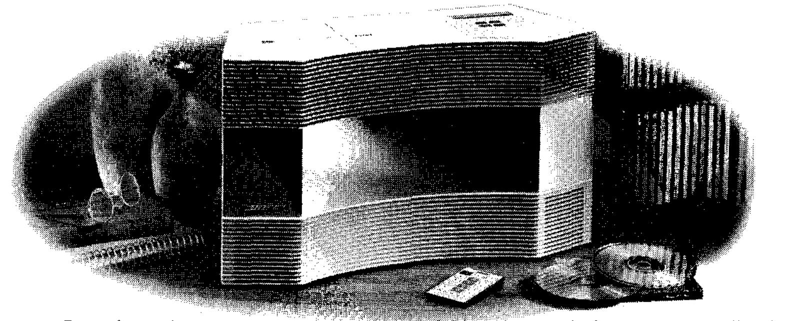

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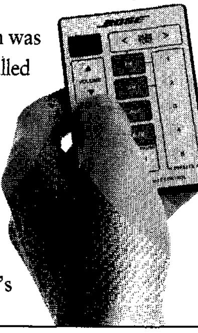

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Mother Night—Keith Gordon's adaptation of an early (1961) Kurt Vonnegut novel is always engrossing but never especially persuasive. The hero (Nick Nolte) is an American writer, living in Germany in the thirties, who is recruited to spy for American intelligence. His wartime reports are encoded in weekly propaganda broadcasts, in which he smoothly explicates the anti-Semitic policies of the Third Reich; after the war, he broods over the possibility that his broadcasts may have done more harm than good. Although Nolte gives an intelligent performance, he's too straightforward an actor to convey the slipperiness of such a man-without-qualities figure. Also with Alan Arkin, Sheryl Lee, and John Goodman.—T.R. (11/4/96) (68th St. Playhouse.)

Paris Was a Woman—The documentary director Greta Schiller's examination of Paris modernism in the twenties and thirties is a confection of American expatriates, French and American lesbians, and avant-garde art and thought. Making impeccable use of old photographs, film footage, and recordings, Schiller gives this world of literary salons and unconventional bookshops a surprising amount of verve. Giants like Picasso, Joyce, Janet Flanner, Djuna Barnes, and Gertrude Stein come across as positively fun-loving, and Paris blooms like a rose.—B.D. (Quad Cinema.)

Ransom—Ron Howard's grinding picture could have been a snappy little hostage thriller but decided, somewhere along the way, to take itself terribly seriously. Mel Gibson plays the wealthy owner of an airline, whose young son (Brawley Nolte) is kidnapped by a gang of good-for-nothings. Rene Russo suffers from a woefully underpowered role as Tom's wife, Gary Sinise struggles to convince us that he has the makings of a scuzzy villain, and Gibson himself has to stand there and act tragic in closeup.—A.L. (11/11/96) (84th Street Sixplex, 86th Street East Twin, Embassy 1, Embassy 2, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.)

Ridicule—Versailles, 1783: the court of Louis XVI, where wit and ridicule are the obsessions. With Charles Berling, Jean Rochefort, Fanny Ardant, and Judith Godreche. Directed by Patrice Leconte; written by Remi Waterhouse. In French. (Angelika Film Center, Cinema II, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Secrets & Lies—Hortense (Marianne Jean-Baptiste), the heroine of Mike Leigh's broadest and most ambitious film to date, decides after the death of her adoptive mother to seek her biological one. The quest turns up Cynthia (Brenda Blethyn), who freaks out: Hortense is middle-class and black, Cynthia working-class and white. Jean-Baptiste gives a quiet, pacific performance; Blethyn deals in spasms of exaggeration which belong in another film altogether. Still, there is a fine supporting cast, and they all gather in the final scene, a cathartic barbecue that starts off as nicely choreographed light comedy and darkens to a Bergman-like chorus of wailing women and slightly overcooked dialogue.—A.L. (Eastside Playhouse and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Set It Off—Jada Pinkett, playing a protective big sister trying to pay for her brother's college education, and Queen Latifah, as a brave, blustering pothead lesbian, lead a foursome of young black women driven by poverty, police brutality, and the general callousness of men and of white people into robbing banks. Vivica A. Fox and Kimberly Elise round out the quartet, and the actresses are all strong in quirky, individual ways. This is a dumb heist movie that nevertheless gets real mileage from the plight of its tough but naïve protagonists. Directed by F. Gary Gray.—S.K. (Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

Shine—The hero of Scott Hicks's speedy, absorbing biographical film is the Australian concert pianist David Helfgott (played, at different stages of his life, by Alex Rafalowicz, Noah Taylor, and Geoffrey Rush), who suffered a severe breakdown, spent years in mental institutions, and then, improbably, resumed his career. It's an artist-in-torment story with a happy ending. Helfgott's experience as the movie relates it represents not only the usual triumph over adversity but also a nearly magical reversal of his relationship to his art: before his collapse, music is his curse; afterward, it's his salvation. Hicks and his screenwriter, Jan Sardi, sacrifice process (the process of musical development and of recovery from mental illness) for pace, and, although the movie's swiftness and lightness are pleasing in themselves, the over-all image they create is indistinct: it just evaporates in your head when the lights come up. Also with Armin Mueller-Stahl, Lynn Redgrave, and John Gielgud (who's in especially buoyant comic form).—T.R. (12/2/96) (Cinema I and Lincoln Square.)

Opening Dec. 6, Sylvester Stallone in "Daylight."

GARY PANTER

Sleepers—Barry Levinson's movie is a doggedly faithful adaptation of Lorenzo Carcaterra's 1995 best-seller, which purported to be a memoir of the author's youth in Hell's Kitchen, his horrifying experiences in an upstate reformatory, and his participation, years later, in an elaborate scheme to avenge the abuses that he and his friends suffered at the hands of the reform school's sadistic guards. The book quickly aroused suspicion that it was a hoax, and the film does nothing to dispel the aura of fishiness: it plays as a thoroughly old-fashioned Hollywood crime melodrama. With Jason Patric, Brad Pitt, Robert De Niro, Kevin Bacon, Minnie Driver, Vittorio Gassman, Frank Medrano, and Dustin Hoffman.—T.R. (11/4/96) (Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Sling Blade—Billy Bob Thornton has the lead in a drama he wrote and directed, about a mildly retarded man with a criminal past living in a small town in the South. With Lucas Black, Natalie Canerday, Dwight Yoakam, and John Ritter. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Space Jam—Fans of Chuck Jones, who animated the classic Warner Bros. cartoons of the forties and fifties, should steer clear of this Looney Tunes reunion. Produced by Ivan Reitman and more assembled than directed by Joe Pytka (who has made some eye-catching television commercials), this big-budget attempt at a merchandising bonanza doesn't begin to approach the artistry of "Who Framed Roger Rabbit": the cartoon characters never seem fully integrated into the live action—they just hang there. The story, in which Michael Jordan, the basketball superstar, saves Bugs Bunny and friends from aliens who want them for their Disney-like amusement park, sacrifices Jones's anarchic spirit to the Warners marketing team in ways so obvious that they make Disney look humble.—B.D. (Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

Star Trek: First Contact—The crew of the Starship Enterprise (it includes Patrick Stewart, LeVar Burton, and Jonathan Frakes, who also directed) heads back to Earth to save the planet. Screenplay by Brannon Braga and Ronald D. Moore. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Astor Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Metro Cinema, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

The War at Home—A drama directed by and starring Emilio Estevez, as a troubled Vietnam veteran in the early nineteen-seventies. With Martin Sheen and Kathy Bates. Written by James Duff, from his 1985 play, "Home Front." (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet—Whether the film really belongs to Shakespeare is open to question: his words are there, if you can hear them above the screech of the soundtrack, but the tone is set entirely by the Australian director Baz Luhrmann ("Strictly Ballroom"), who has updated the setting to a lurid Latino city bristling with drug wars and police helicopters. The Montague and Capulet elders (led by Brian Dennehy and Paul Sorvino) cruise round in stretch limos, while their errant offspring practice their gunplay at the beach. The energy is unstoppable, and that's the problem: Luhrmann juggles with the play so busily that he lets it slip through his fingers. Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes give it their all as the star-crossed lovers, but, like the rest of the cast, they tend to shout or hurry their lines when everything gets to be too much; by the end, any hint of tragedy has disappeared in the kitsch.—A.L. (Reviewed 11/25/96 under Onward and Upward with the Arts.) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, National Twin, and Orpheum VII.)

Zero Kelvin—Director Hans Petter Moland's thriller centers on three men who spend the winter of 1925 in East Greenland trapping animals for fur. With Stellan Skarsgård, Gard B. Eidsvold, and Bjørn Sundquist. In Norwegian. (Film Forum; through Dec. 10.)

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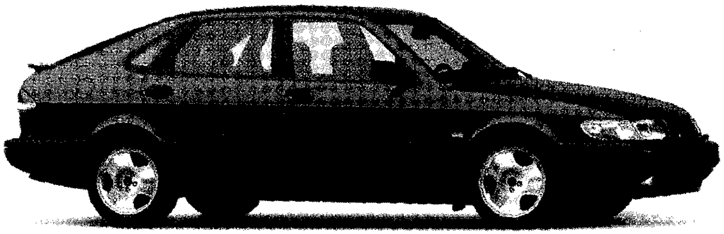

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ALSO PLAYING

BASQUIAT (reviewed in our issue of 8/19/96): The Screening Room. . . . **BOUND:** Art Greenwich Twin. . . . **COLD COMFORT FARM** (5/13/96): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **EMMA** (8/5/96): 64th and 2nd. . . . **FAR HARBOR:** Quad Cinema. . . . **FLY AWAY HOME** (9/16/96): 64th and 2nd. . . . **THE FUNERAL:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **THE GARDEN OF THE FINZI-CONTINIS:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **THE GHOST AND THE DARKNESS:** State. . . . **THE GLIMMER MAN:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **HIGH SCHOOL HIGH** (11/11/96): Embassy 3. . . . **INDEPENDENCE DAY** (7/15/96): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **LOVESICK ON NANA STREET:** Angelika 57. . . . **THE PROPRIETOR:** Carnegie Hall Cinemas. . . . **A SINGLE GIRL:** Quad Cinema. . . . **SURVIVING PICASSO:** Paris. . . . **SWINGERS:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **THAT THING YOU DO!** (10/7/96): Manhattan Twin and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **A TIME TO KILL** (7/29/96): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **TRAINSPOTTING** (7/22/96): The Screening Room. . . . **TWELFTH NIGHT:** Regency. . . . **WALKING AND TALKING:** 59th Street East Cinema.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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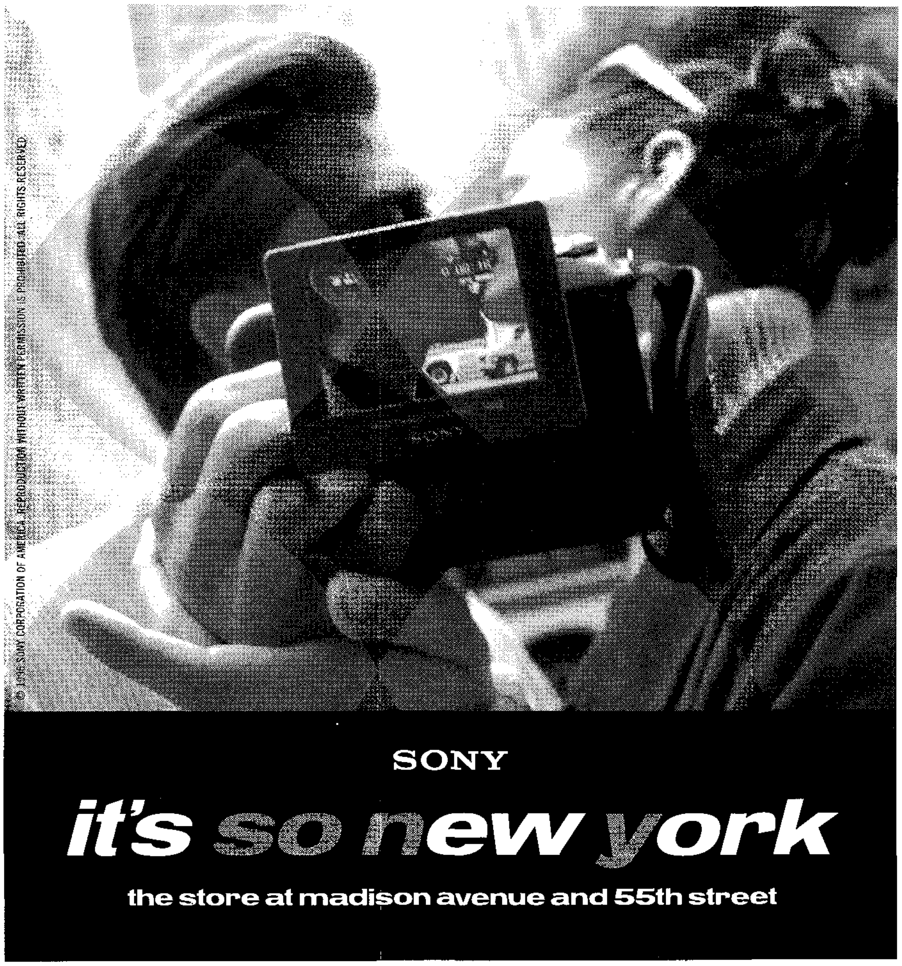
(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th St.
Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Baronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy I, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Manhattan Twin, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Metro Cinema I and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St.
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
68th St. Playhouse, Third Ave. at 68th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton I and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd St.
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly I and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.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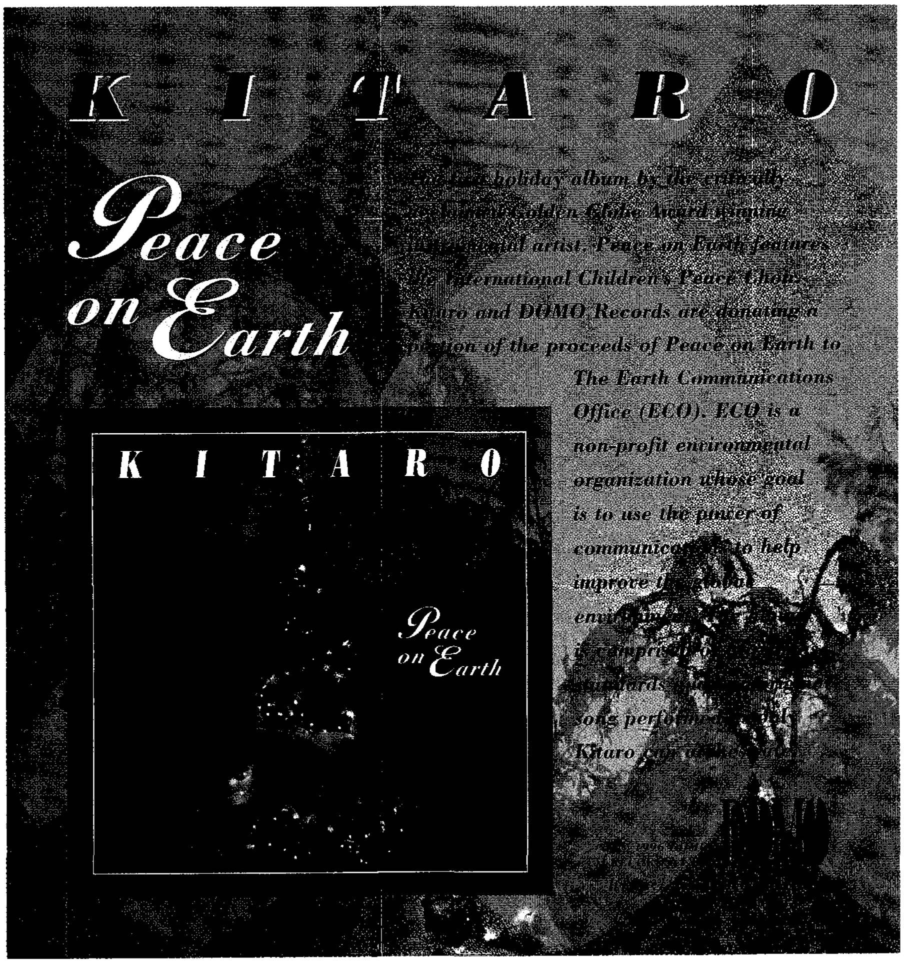
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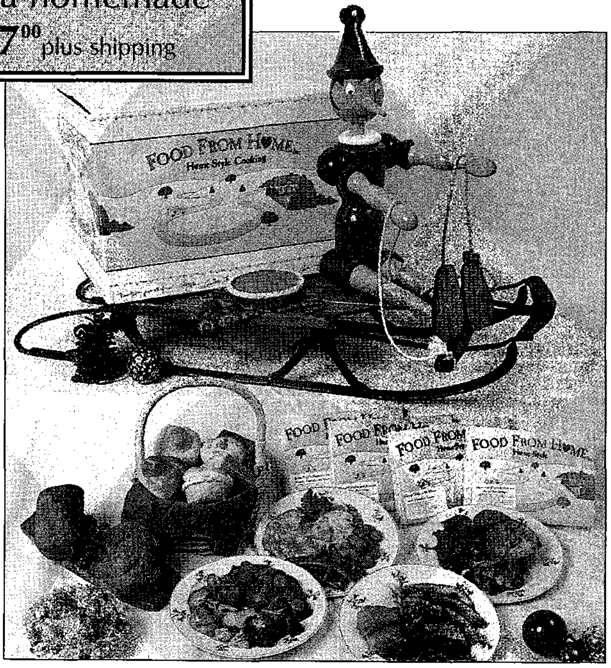
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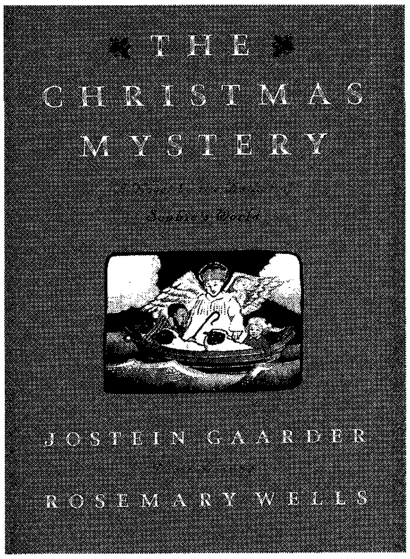

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REVIVALS

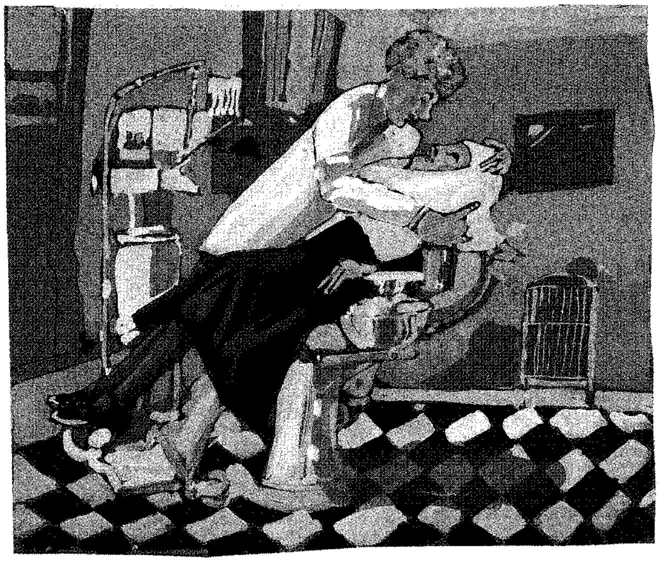
(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

Beetlejuice (1988)—A devoted, home-loving young couple (Alec Baldwin and Geena Davis) are drowned in a car accident, and when they return to their New England house as ghosts they are miffed by the redecorating of the New Yorkers who have bought it. Too mild to scare these intruders away, they call upon the services of the rutty little demon Betelgeuse (pronounced "Beetlejuice"). Michael Keaton plays the part, and his uninhibited comic performance is like an exploding head. The young director, Tim Burton, takes stabs into the irrational and the incongruous; the film's blandness is edged with near-genius (and some great special effects). The smudge-faced blond Catherine O'Hara is brilliant as the madwoman who is the new lady of the house.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Dec. 8.)

Blues in the Night (1941)—Jazz and melodrama, in a fermented mixture. Directed by Anatole Litvak and written by Robert Rossen, this self-serious, overheated Warners picture about the life of travelling musicians was released just before Pearl Harbor. Richard Whorf is the tormented pianist who cracks up, and Betty Field is the bad, bad girl who leads him astray. Whorf's band includes Elia Kazan; the vocalist is Priscilla Lane. The songs are by Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Dec. 5.)

City for Conquest (1941)—Tracking and dollying through immense Gotham-in-Burbank sets, the director, Anatole Litvak, serves up a deluxe Warner Bros. proletarian gumbo. Arthur Kennedy is a composer yearning to write *the* symphony of New York City; James Cagney is his older brother, a truck driver who turns prizefighter, first to bankroll his sibling and then to impress Ann Sheridan, who's been spending too much time with Anthony Quinn, her slick dancing partner. Litvak and the screenwriter, John Wexley (who adapted Aben Kandel's novel), keep ladling on spicy ingredients; by the time an underhanded opponent blinds Cagney in the ring, and hot-shot gambler Elia Kazan wreaks a revenge that backfires, you feel like crying "Enough, already!" But Litvak and company want you to weep: there's still the symphony's première to come. . . . The amazing cast includes Frank Craven, Donald Crisp, Jerome Cowan, George Tobias, and Lee Patrick. Cagney, as always, is brilliantly imaginative: he conveys near-total blindness kinetically, sidling through rooms and cocking his head to get better angles on the available light.—M.S. (Film Forum 2; Dec. 5.)

Greed (1924)—"He can't make small of me!" the burly dentist McTeague (Gibson Gowland) screams when his best friend throws a knife at him. But Marcus (Jean Hersholt) can make small of him, and does. The director, Erich von Stroheim, manages to make his characters small and big simultaneously. He uncovers creatures of the id buried in these avaricious men and in a woman who starts out as Marcus's girl and becomes McTeague's wife: the proper, increasingly miserly Trina (ZaSu Pitts). M-G-M's production chief, Irving Thalberg, had von Stroheim's epic adaptation of Frank Norris's 1899 novel, "McTeague," chopped to a quarter of its original nine-hour length, and the studio cut is the only version that has survived. But it remains the benchmark of movie naturalism—veracious and harrowing.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; Dec. 8.)


Gibson Gowland and ZaSu Pitts in "Greed."

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

The High Cost of Loving (1958)—This satirical comedy about organization men has a feeling for the everyday inadequacies and anxieties that you laugh at out of the wrong side of your face. And it has a very funny opening sequence, with the happily married lowly business executive (José Ferrer) and his wife (Gena Rowlands, in her film début) getting up and preparing to go to their jobs without a word to each other. The picture, which Ferrer directed, isn't really much (the writing is weak, the subject is small), but it moves along and it was one of the few even passable comedies of its year. Yet it failed at the box office, and Ferrer didn't direct any more chance-taking movies.—P.K. (Anthology Film Archives; Dec. 7.)

Man on a Tightrope (1953)—Czech circus manager Fredric March and his troupe make a mad dash to the Bavarian border as Red bullets fly. Unfortunately, the fact-inspired script (by Robert E. Sherwood) portrays March as an impossible fifties paterfamilias. Apolitical but anti-Communist, he's always pulling people aside for private talks on sensitive issues, and always trying to prove to his love-struck daughter (Terry Moore) and his contemptuous, unfaithful second wife (Gloria Grahame) that Father knows best. Elia Kazan never directed a worse scene than the one in which March slaps Grahame and—presto, change-o—she turns into a good woman. Kazan wrings little poetic flavor out of the one-ring-circus atmosphere (the material would have been perfect for Fellini), and, after a ninety-minute buildup, the final bout of action is embarrassingly perfunctory. With Adolphe Menjou (as a Communist inspector), Cameron Mitchell (as Moore's sweetheart, with whom she takes a swim scored to "The Moldau"), and Richard Boone (who gives the most believable performance, as March's resentful tent hand).—M.S. (Film Forum 2; Dec. 10-11.)

Panic in the Streets (1950)—Elia Kazan took a fairly conventional thriller script and made a tense, high-powered movie of it. The setting is the New Orleans waterfront; a murder victim is discovered to be carrying plague, and a Public Health doctor (Richard Widmark) and a city detective (Paul Douglas) hunt for everybody who came into contact with him. Mean Jack Palance and frightened, sweaty Zero Mostel are the thugs they're after. With Barbara Bel Geddes, who is exceedingly likable as Widmark's wife.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Dec. 10-11.)

Vertigo (1958)—The infinitely suggestive sights and sounds of Alfred Hitchcock's romantic thriller have been refurbished by the ace film-restoration team of Robert A. Harris and James C. Katz. As the detective hero (James Stewart) tails a mysterious woman (Kim Novak) at a distance that becomes progressively less discreet, we gradually realize that, in the course of the film, the straight line of surveillance is constantly, imperceptibly curving, until finally it describes a perfect circle: the true shape of romantic obsession. Also with Barbara Bel Geddes and Tom Helmore. The soaring music is by Bernard Herrmann.—T.R. (11/18/96) (Chelsea Cinemas.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Films Elia Kazan either directed or appeared in. Dec. 4: "Gentleman's Agreement" (1947) and "Pinky" (1949). . . . Dec. 5: "Blues in the Night" (†) and "City for Conquest" (†). . . . Dec. 6-8: "A Streetcar Named Desire" (1951). . . . Dec. 10-11: "Panic in the Streets" (†) and "Man on a Tightrope" (†). . . . ¶ Dec. 9: "The Cameraman" (1928, Edward Sedgwick, Jr.) and "When the Clouds Roll By" (1919, Victor Fleming).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Through Dec. 6: Films by three Korean filmmakers (Im Kwon-Taek, Yu Hyun-Mok, and Shin Sang-Ok), all in Korean, with English subtitles. . . . ¶ Dec. 5 at 3 and 6: "Patagonia" (1996, Luis Valdovino and Dan Boord) and "A Refutation of Time" (1996, Valdovino and Boord). . . . ¶ Starting Dec. 6: Recent films from Germany; most in German, with English subtitles. . . . ¶ Dec. 7 at 2 and Dec. 9 at 2:30: "Blind Husbands" (1919, Erich von Stroheim; silent). . . . ¶ Dec. 7 at 5 and Dec. 10 at 2:30: "Foolish Wives" (1922, von Stroheim; silent). . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 2: "Greed" (†). . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 5: "Hello, Sister!" (1933, Alfred Werker). . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 6: "Born Yesterday" (1950, George Cukor), with Judy Holliday.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Dec. 5: Films from Arab countries. . . . ¶ Starting Dec. 6: Recent films from Spain; all in Spanish, with English subtitles. . . . ¶ Dec. 7-8 at 2: Two different programs of dance on film.

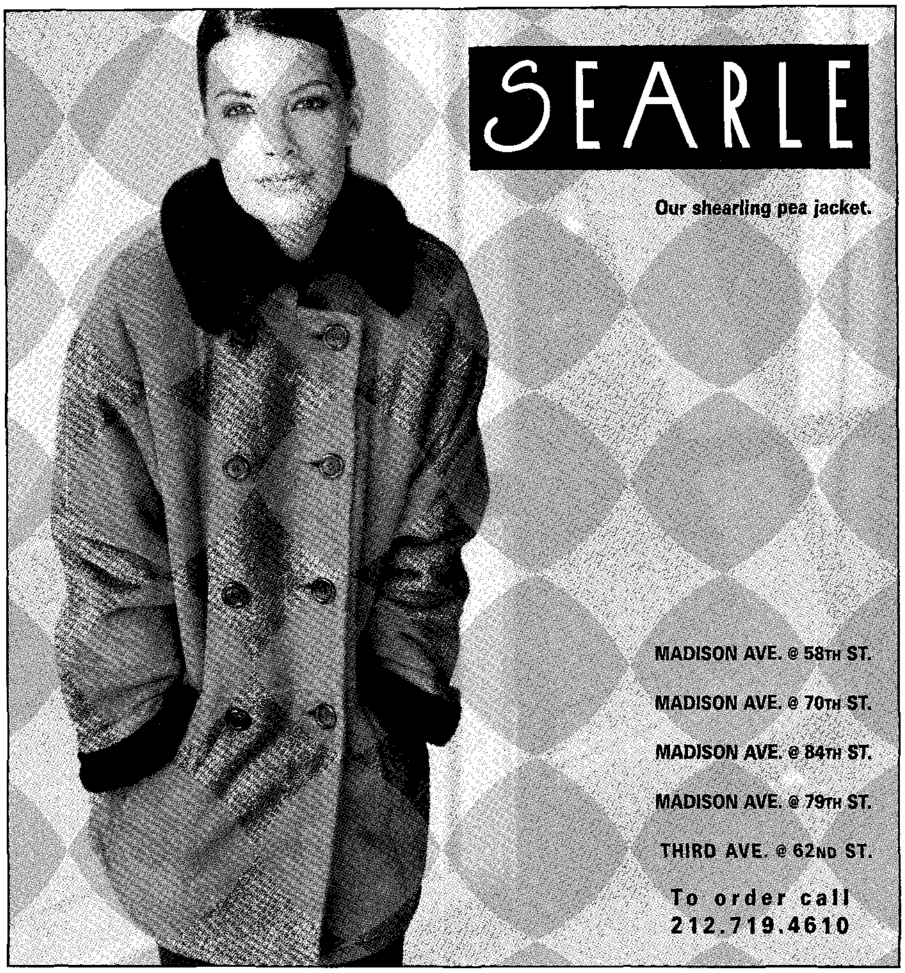
Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Dec. 10 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Belle de Jour" (1969, Luis Buñuel; in French).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Films directed by Tim Burton. Dec. 8 at 2: "Beetlejuice" (†). . . . Dec. 8 at 4: "Ed Wood" (1994).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Dec. 8 at 7, the feature will be "The Parent Trap" (1961, David Swift).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.—Through Dec. 12, the 4th Annual Contemporary African Diaspora Film Festival, featuring thirty-five films from twenty-four countries. (For information about titles, schedules, and tickets, call 749-6020.)

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—A program of films by Jacques Rivette; in French, with English subtitles. Dec. 4-5 at 6:20: "Jeanne la Pucelle: Part One, Les Batailles" (1993). . . . Dec. 4-5 at 9:15: "Duelle" (1976). . . . Dec. 5 at 8: "Jean Renoir, le Patron" (1967). . . . Dec. 5 at 9:30: "Le Point du Nord" (1980). . . . Dec. 6 at 6 and Dec. 7-10 at 6:30: "Jeanne la Pucelle: Part Two, Les Prisons" (1993). . . . Dec. 7-8 at 2: "Divertimento" (1994). . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 7: "Raise the Red Lantern" (1992, Zang Yimou; in Chinese). . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 9:10: "The Scent of Green Papaya" (1994, Tran Anh Hung; in Vietnamese). . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 8, Dec. 7 at 6:30, and Dec. 8 at 7:30: "Those Loved by God" (1992, Johannes Holzhausen) and "The Bed Queen" (1994, Gabrielle Baur). . . . ¶ A program of films starring Gena Rowlands. Dec. 6 at 9: "Opening Night" (1977, John Cassavetes). . . . Dec. 7 at 4:30: "The High Cost of Loving" (†). . . . Dec. 7 at 9:30: "Gloria" (1980, Cassavetes). . . . Dec. 8 at 4:30: "Another Woman" (1988, Woody Allen). . . . Dec. 8 at 9:30: "Faces" (1968, Cassavetes). . . . Dec. 9 at 9:30: "Lonely Are the Brave" (1962, David Miller). . . . Dec. 10 at 9:30: "Once Around" (1991, Lasse Hallström). . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 9:30, Dec. 7 at 4, and Dec. 8 at 5 and 9:30: "Forgotten Tenor" (1994, Abraham Ravett).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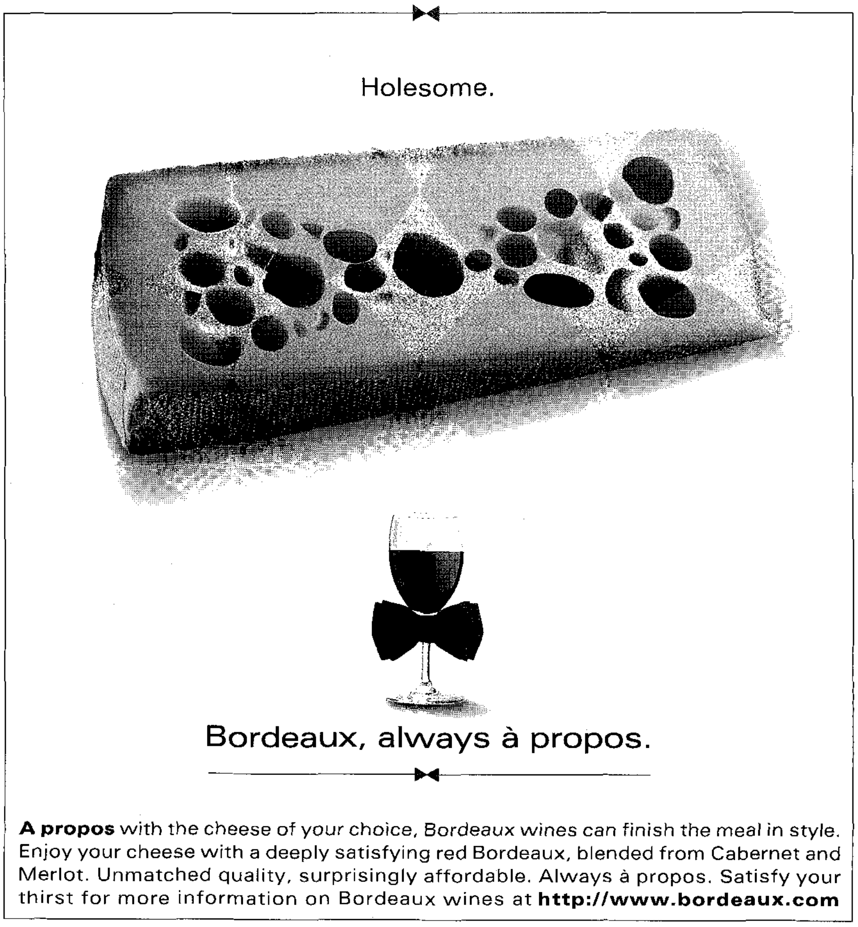

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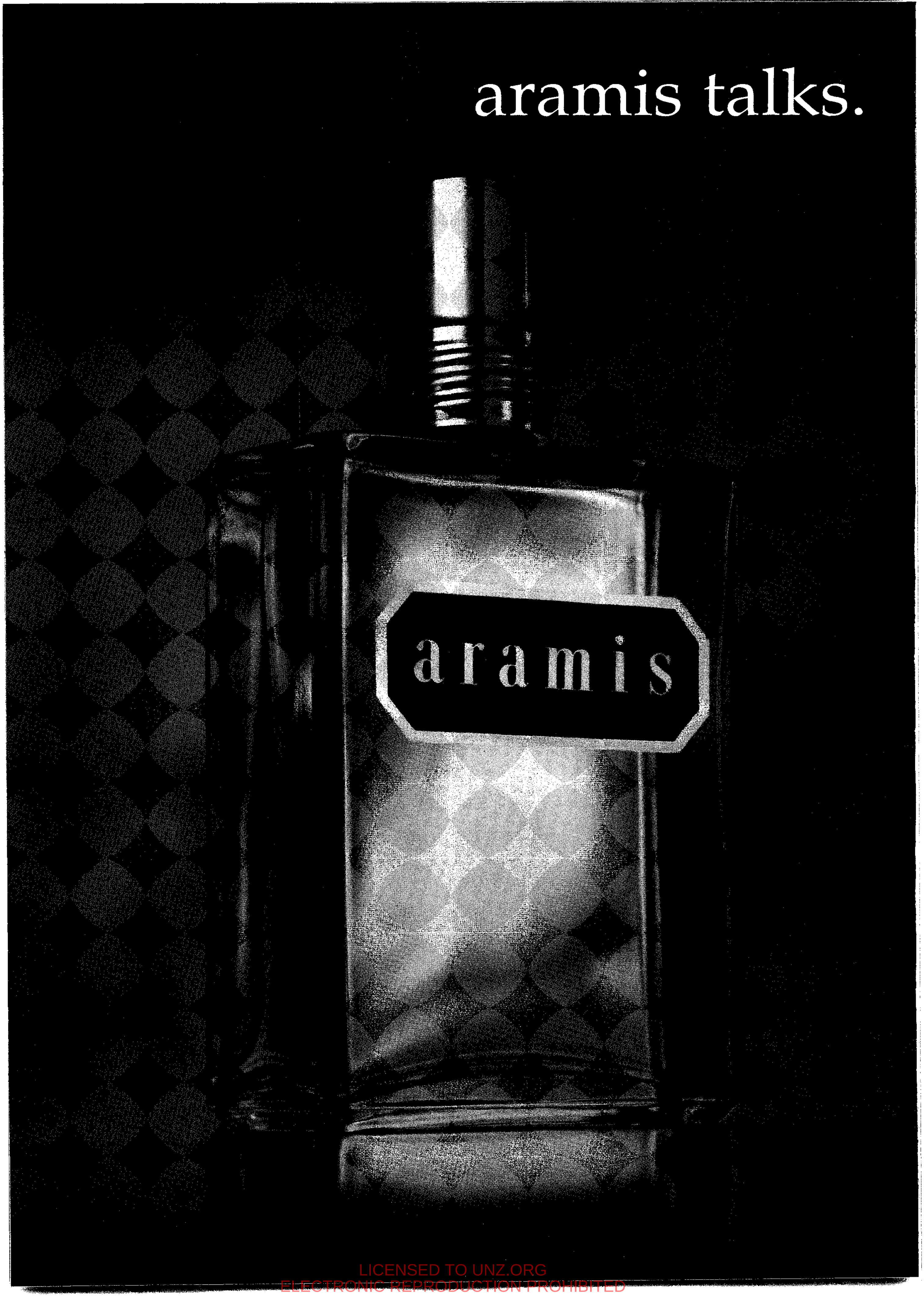
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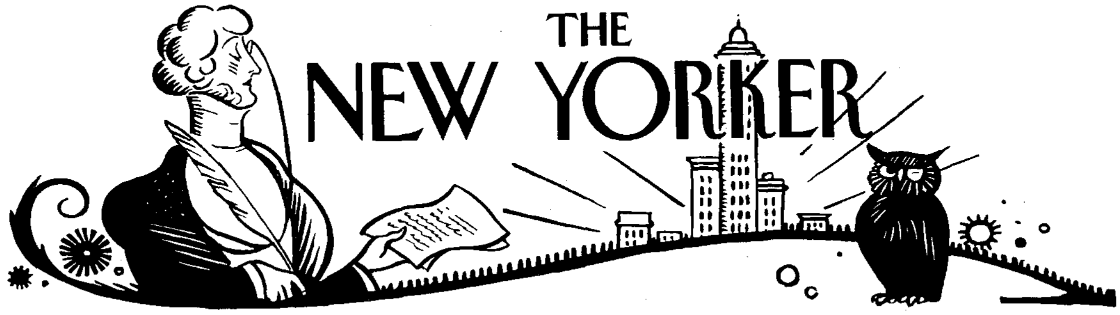
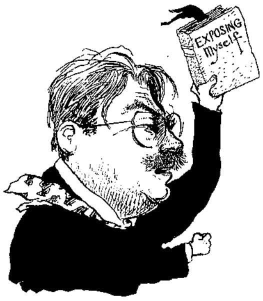


THE TALK OF THE TOWN

MEASURE FOR MEASURE



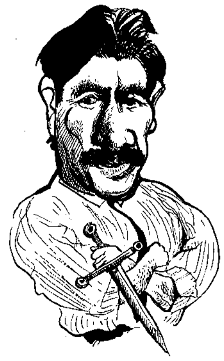
Gary Bostwick

LATELY, it appears that justice has become less about the law than about the lawyers. Take, for example, the case of Sonny Gibson v. Geraldo Rivera, which is coming to trial this week in Los Angeles. It concerns a relatively new area of litigation: the ambushing of talk-show guests by hosts who are determined to raise mortification to an art form. Gibson, the plaintiff, would seem to have been a talk-show dream: an admitted murderer (in an as-told-to memoir called “Mafia Kingpin”) who had turned himself around and was trying to launch himself as an actor. Rivera, who is not being personally sued, but whose producing company is the primary defendant, is, of course, the host of “The Geraldo Rivera Show.”

According to Gibson, he was invited to appear on “Geraldo” in May of 1994 to discuss his transformation. (The producers remember the invitation differently, saying it was understood that Gibson would talk about his bad old days, as well as the new ones.) He arrived at a Los Angeles studio, where he was outfitted with earphones and a mike and seated in front of a TV camera. No sound came through the earphones, and the camera, as far as he could tell, was not running. Gibson thought that he was waiting for the show to start, but in fact it had already started, in another studio. There, Rivera was interviewing two women, both disguised, who—as Gibson’s face was intermittently flashed on the screen—told of having been sexually molested by the ex-mafioso. Finally, Rivera announced that it was time to meet the man in question, at which point Gibson’s earphones and mike were turned on, and he found himself facing two angry accusers. After a bit of shouting, Gibson’s mike was shut off, and he walked out. Later, he decided to sue “Geraldo” for breach of contract.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY HOWARD COALE

The lawyer he chose was Gary Bostwick, who is renowned for having represented the convicted murderer Jeffrey MacDonald in his breach-of-contract suit against the journalist Joe McGinnis, as well as for having defended Janet Malcolm in the libel suit brought by the psychoanalyst Jeffrey Masson for an article that appeared in this magazine. Recently, Rivera and Bostwick met for a deposition in New York. Most such meetings are drab affairs, but this one was not. It featured two masters of the art of ambush, with highly contrasting styles.



Geraldo Rivera

When Rivera, who once practiced criminal law himself, reminded Bostwick that his client was a “violent and bloodthirsty” man as revealed through “an expression of soul” (i.e., Gibson’s memoir), Bostwick responded, “When you say a book is an expression of your soul, would you say ‘Exposing Myself’ ”—Rivera’s sensationalistic 1991 memoir—“is an expression of your soul?”

“I think it was, yes, at the time,” Rivera said. “I reflect on it. I ponder about it. I’m sorry I wrote it, but it was clearly a reflection of my soul.”

A little later, Rivera referred to Bostwick’s client as a “mass murderer,” and reminded the attorney that Gibson, in his book, claimed to have killed fourteen people.

BOSTWICK: Does that make him a mass murderer?

RIVERA: Well, if he’s not a mass murderer, then he’s a colossal liar. Either way, you lose.

BOSTWICK: Who?

RIVERA: Anyone who seeks to be unjustly enriched by this preposterous lawsuit.

Bostwick let that one pass, then found an opening when Rivera commented that an objection to a point that his own lawyer had raised was “a good objection.” Bostwick remarked, “If I made as much money as you did doing something other than the law, I would stick to what I was doing and let other people who make less money worry what the law is.”

At one point, Bostwick wanted to know whether it was true that Rivera, upon being served with papers for the lawsuit, had thrown a “tantrum.”

RIVERA: I save my tantrums for less comical experiences.

BOSTWICK: Very Shakespearean of you.

RIVERA: They say that about me.

BOSTWICK: “Coriolanus,” I think, is the right one.

RIVERA: Not “Hamlet”?

BOSTWICK: No. I think there’s absolutely no ambiguity about you.

A TALKING FROG

“I-I-I am ex-extremely nervous,” stammered Adam Michnik, the onetime Solidarity firebrand, more recently (since 1989) the editor-in-chief of Warsaw’s *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Eastern Europe’s foremost daily), and most recently a visiting professor at the New School for Social Research, as he began his closing lecture. Michnik is famous for his machine-gun stammer, which he has been known to play like a Stradivarius. His stammer that evening was pronounced, since, for the first time ever, he was about to declaim in newly semi-learned English, and, as he now confessed, "Eng-Eng-English is not my c-cup of tea!"

In typical fashion, Michnik began with a joke, about two guys "with the experience that comes with age," who were playing tennis. At one point, the ball rolls into some bushes, and when one of the players goes to retrieve it he is confronted by a frog who claims to be a beautiful princess who has been turned into a frog by a mischievous wizard. If the player will kiss her, the frog assures him, she'll revert to her princess state and marry him, and they'll both live happily ever after. The player pockets the frog and returns to the game. After a bit, the frog, inside the player's pocket, croaks, "Sir, did you forget about me? I'm this beautiful princess, turned into a frog, if you kiss me . . ." and so forth, to which she receives the reply, "Dear lady frog, I will be completely honest with you. I have reached the age at which I would rather have a talking frog than a new wife."

Adam Michnik

As the laughter eddied, Michnik offered a gloss: "This frog is Central Europe, knocking at the gates of NATO and the European Union . . . they don't yet know whether they prefer to have a talking frog or a new wife." But Michnik's joke worked on other levels as well. For one thing, it enabled him to put his own croaking efforts to transcend his linguistic limitations in a magical light, subliminally begging the audience's indulgence.

While Michnik, squinting behind rectangular glasses perched at the tip of his nose, made his way through a survey of the past decade's transformations in Central Europe, an even more relevant aspect of his opening joke became clear. A leader of the take-to-the-streets generation of 1968, Michnik seemed to be addressing his fellow graying activists—many of whom were present—as, with some melancholy, he spoke of the necessary abandonment of the moral absolutism that once had so energized them.

He explained, "D-d-democracy is neither black nor red. Democracy is gray. . . . It chooses banality over excellence, shrewdness over nobility, empty promise over true competence. . . . It is eternal imperfection, a mixture of sinfulness, saintliness, and monkey business. This is why the seekers of a moral state and of a perfectly just society do not like democracy. Yet only democracy—having the capacity to question itself—also has the capacity to correct its own mistakes."

After citing a host of issues confounding governments on both sides of the former Iron Curtain, Michnik went on, "In each of these debates, there is a need for the presence of a socialist care for the poorest, a conservative defense of tradition, and a liberal reflection on efficiency and growth. . . . Fundamentalists of different varieties condemn the moral relativism of democracy, as though it were the s-s-state which should be the guardian of moral virtue. We, however, the defenders of gray democracy, do not grant the state this right. We want human virtues to be guarded by the human conscience." He paused. "That is why we say, 'Gr-gr-gray is beautiful!' "

He smiled, breathed deep, then concluded, without the slightest stammer, "And all of this has been told to you by a frog from Central Europe."

THE PENTAGON SUITCASES

Among those to whom tributes were paid during the Committee to Protect Journalists' annual dinner, held last week at the Waldorf, were two people who could not be present. Ocak Isik Yurtcu, the former editor of a now defunct Turkish daily, had to miss the black-tie event because he was serving a fifteen-year prison sentence for publishing "separatist propaganda." Even more disturbing was the absence of Veronica Guerin, of the Dublin *Sunday Independent*, who last June was murdered for reporting about organized crime in Ireland. A looming image of Guerin on a screen behind the podium reduced the gathering of nine hundred Fourth Estaters to somber silence. Then, with the evening's final homage, the mood shifted.

Walter Cronkite, looking more than ever like a beardless Santa, introduced Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, Jr., the publisher of the New York *Times*, who was there to present the Burton Benjamin Memorial Award to his father, the *Times*' chairman, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger. Twenty-five years ago, the elder Sulzberger had made the intrepid decision to publish the Pentagon Papers, thereby revealing the United States government's mendacity about the Vietnam War. Sulzberger Junior, in Don Rickles mode, began by characterizing his father as "a man of such limited imagination that he couldn't even come up with an original name for his son." On the day in 1963 that his father became publisher, he said, his first executive decision was "not to throw up." And so on, all lovingly (ahem) delivered, and all rather droll, though not nearly as droll as the old man, who when his turn came settled the Oedipal score with a masterly display of deflation.

He recounted how he had first been informed by the then executive editor, A. M. Rosenthal, that the *Times* had acquired "a mass of highly classified government documents," which Rosenthal intended to publish. "The more I listened," Sulzberger said, "the more certain I became that the entire operation smelled of twenty years to life. I quickly called the *Times*' longtime outside lawyers. Lord, Day & Lord was a well-established firm numbering among its clients the Cunard Line. Whether they were traumatized by the loss of the Titanic I really can't say, but they certainly were cautious. So cautious, indeed, that their senior partner told me that if the *Times* chose to publish the documents his firm would refuse to defend us. With all that cheerful advice, I called Abe Rosenthal and told him that if I were going to go to jail for publishing something, I thought it made sense to read it.

" 'Do you wish to read it all?' he inquired. 'Yes,' I responded, 'all of it.' From the glee in his voice, I should have smelled a rat. It wasn't too long before there was a knock at the door and in comes Abe, pushing a large shopping cart overflowing with papers. With a beatific smile, he announced, 'Here you are. Happy reading.' He loved it. Right then, I vowed to get even—when I got out."

Until he cuddled up with the Penta-

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gon Papers, Sulzberger added, he "did not know that it was possible to read and sleep at the same time. They were long—very long. But one thing was undeniable. If I had been in charge of that mess, I'd have tried to keep it secret also." His deadpan intact, he continued, "I have never understood why President Nixon fought so hard to squelch these papers. I would have thought that he would bemoan their publication, joyfully blame the mess on Lyndon Johnson, and move on to Watergate. But then I have never understood Washington."

Throughout the editing process, the publisher and his wife were planning a European trip, to begin the day after publication. "By then," Sulzberger recalled, "I was convinced that one of two things would occur: Either they'd come and take me to jail or readers of the *Times* would fall back to bed exhausted by the weight of our coverage. Monday morning came and, as I was still a free man, I assumed our readers to be asleep, so I went to Europe. It was a fine visit, lasting about three hours. But, ever confident, I told my wife to keep my suitcases and I'd be right back. My clothes had a wonderful holiday.

"The rest," he concluded, "is history. It was a fascinating time, but, like this speech, I'm glad it's over."

HEAVEN'S GATE

ONLY fifteen people at a time are allowed to climb the series of narrow, aluminum, safe-as-can-be-of-course-but-don't-try-and-tell-*me*-they're-not-swaying ladders that lead, a hundred and sixteen feet later, to a loft-size scaffold, which, for the next six or seven months, will hover just below the city's best-loved ceiling, the glory at the top of Grand Central Terminal's improbably vast main concourse. The most significant turnaround in the terminal's eighty-three-year history is now under way as the result of a momentous, if already ancient, lawsuit. The terminal, which opened in 1913, did not become a permanent part of New York City until 1978, when the Supreme Court ruled that it was a good idea for the city to proclaim this best of buildings, which its then landlord hoped to gut for a high-rise, to be a landmark that—boom, bust, moth, or rust—must not disappear. Because it now seemed likely that Grand Central would outlive global warming, new thoughts began to take form—for instance, that the terminal should start paying its own way.

The solution, under the supervision of the architects Beyer Blinder Belle, is a hundred and seventy-five million dollars' worth of work that, over the next year or two, will simultaneously restore the station and ready it for new roles. A sort of mall is being installed, and dozens of non-franchise restaurants and shops, including a green market, will join the Oyster Bar and Zaro's Bread Basket, the terminal's anchoring tenants, in hopes of enticing people to linger awhile.

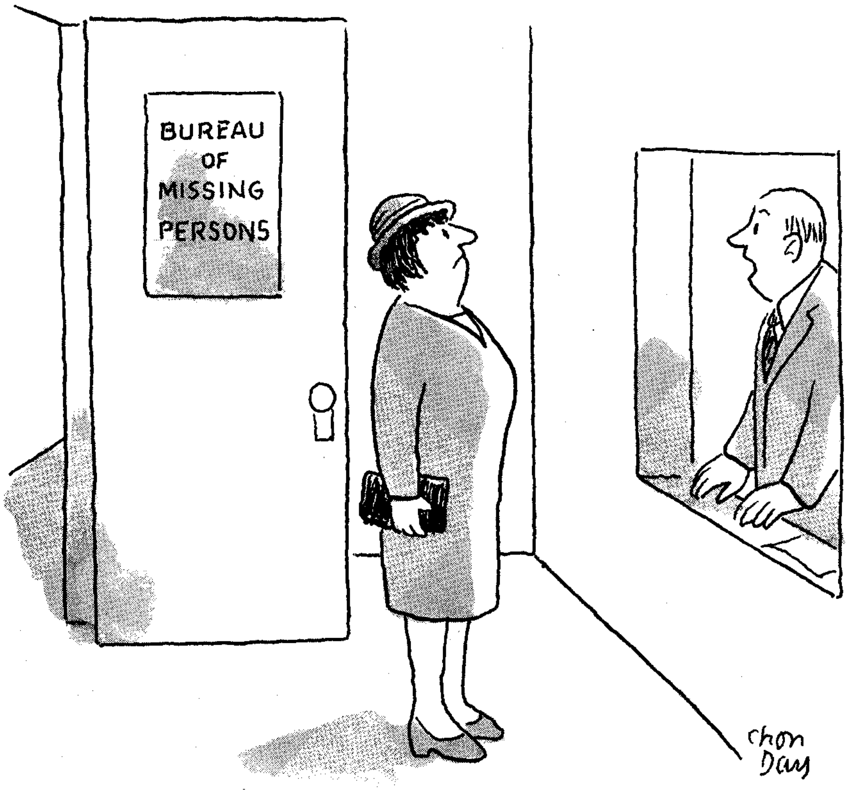
Up on the sky scaffold, the station is being reconnected to the spirit of the intrepid artists who decorated it. Gold-leaf-glowing stars, hundreds of them, shining in a daytime sky. Fifty-nine stars illuminated by tiny electric lights. Constellations like Pegasus and Aquarius. A splashy mural half as big as a football field. And it was all supposed to be temporary—to be replaced within a few years by a skylight. Never happened. Easy now to see why.

It's exhilarating to watch fifty years of brownish-blackish grime—cigarette smoke, electrical-fire smoke, trash-fire smoke, burnt hot-dog smoke, soot, stirred-up dust from sidewalks, car exhaust, diesel-train exhaust, and flecks of steel rubbed off train wheels and train tracks—levitate from the ceiling with a few soft strokes of a cloth, and to hear John Canning, a restorer from Glasgow, explain that all he'll need is sixty-five hundred cotton rags, fifteen hundred gallons of water, and a mild cleaning agent similar to the stuff used on the Sistine Chapel. And, in this unexpectedly contemplative space, it's oddly moving to see five children's plastic wading pools, including a yellow one with Big Bird and a blue one with smiling penguins, waiting to catch any spills from the cleaning.

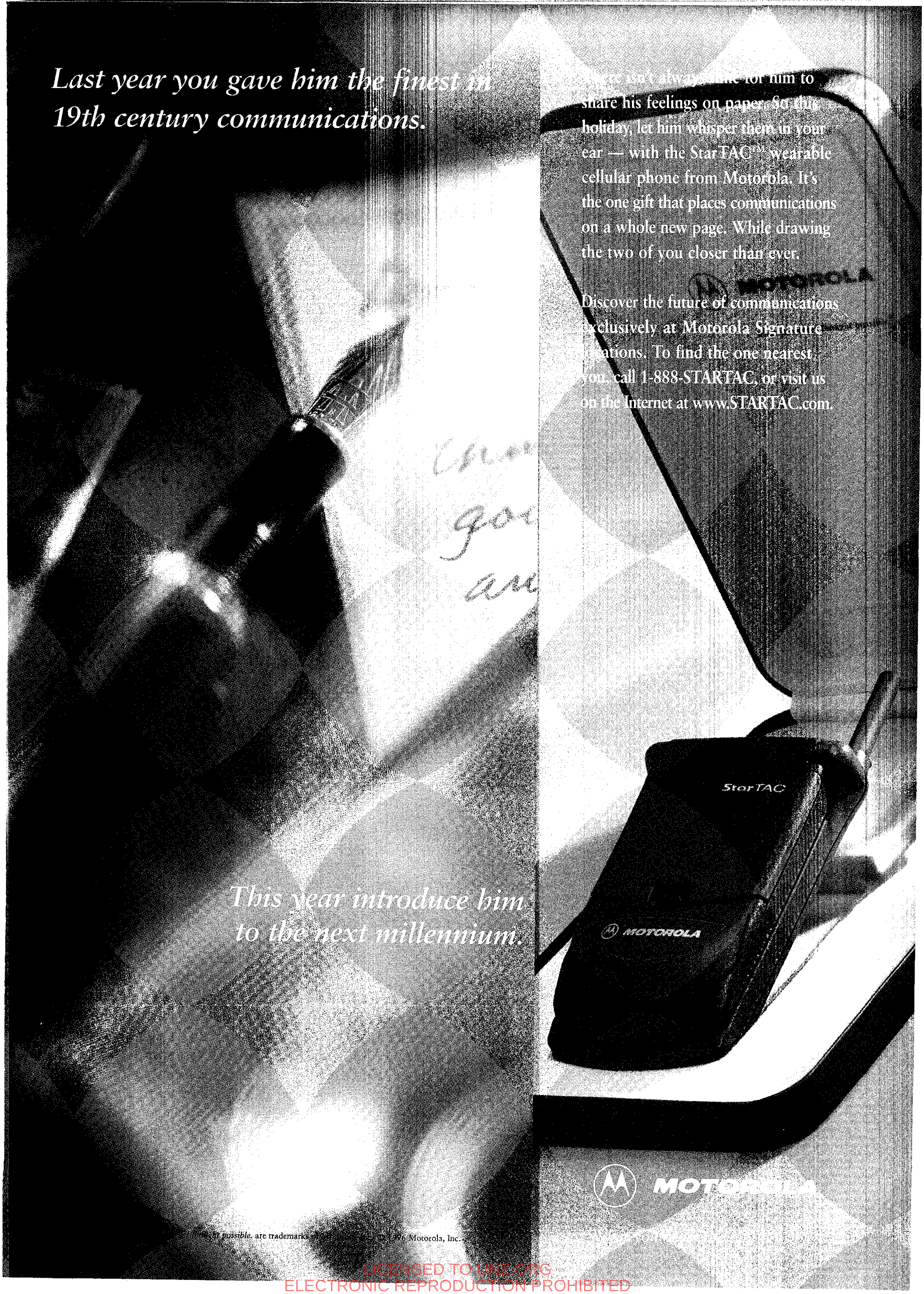
A muralist named Charles Gulbrandsen has been one of the restorers. He says that his grandfather, also Charles Gulbrandsen, was an apprentice painter on the original sky mural and the chief painter on its redesign, in 1945, and that he invariably wore a black suit and a red bow tie. He was also, his grandson says, a man who "would sit down with the Sunday want ads, adding a few quick pen strokes, and come up with a miniature mural of castles, turrets, horses, and holiday crowds."

This week, New Yorkers will get an early holiday treat. Late one night, the sky scaffold will be moved approximately thirty feet west, and then, from the chaos of the concourse, heavenward gazers will get a lasting first glimpse of bright golden stars in a startling blue sky. ♦

"Measure for Measure," Gwen Davis; "A Talking Frog," Lawrence Weschler; "The Pentagon Suitcases," Mark Singer; "Heaven's Gate," Tony Hiss.



"And just what color are your husband's beady little eyes?"



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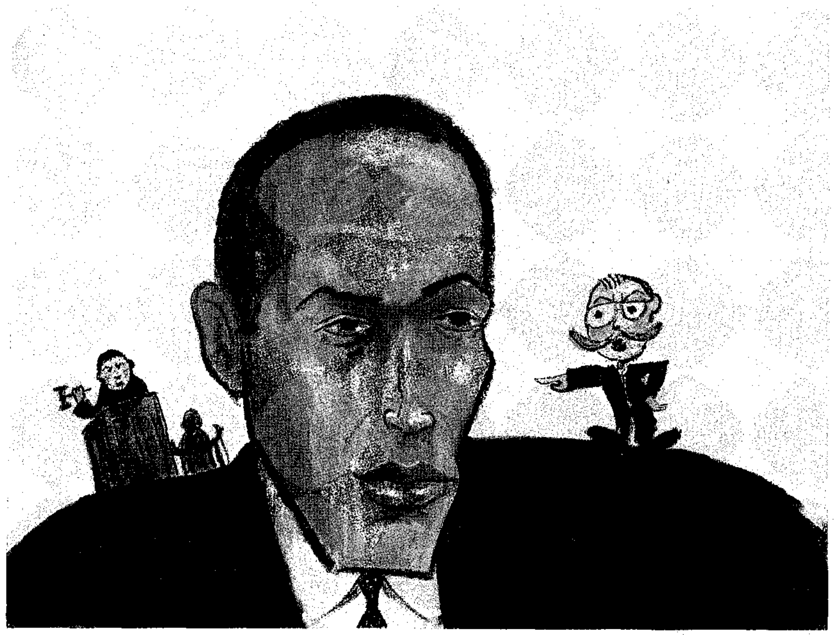
ASKING FOR IT

O. J. Simpson's new defense strategy is as audacious as the last.

BY JEFFREY TOOBIN



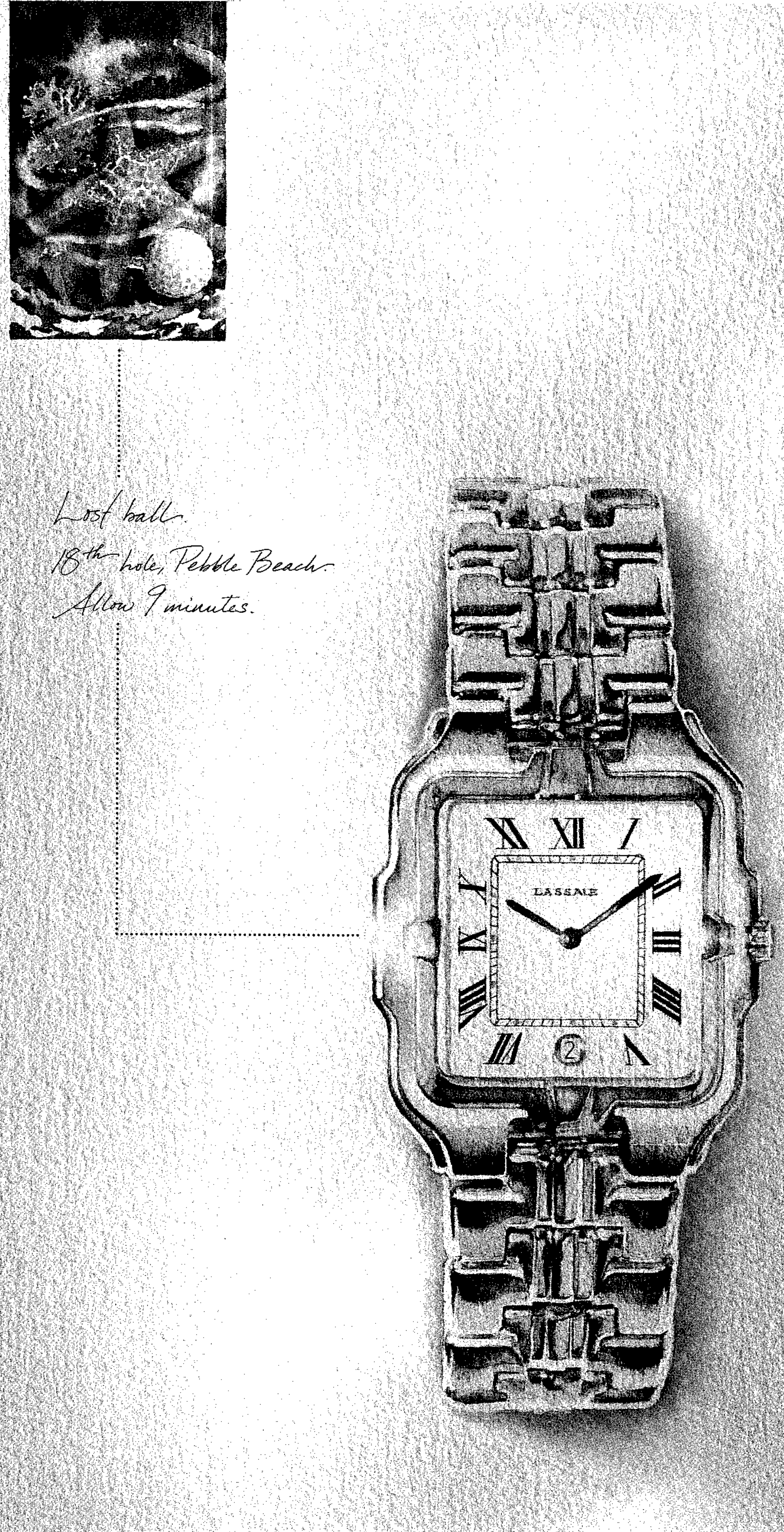
Simpson: Once a black martyr, now a stalked star.

AHMET GÖRGÜN

SHORTLY after eight-thirty in the morning on court days in the "wrongful death" civil lawsuit filed against O. J. Simpson by the families of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman, a bailiff with a microphone tartly announces that the jurors are taking their seats. Judge Hiroshi Fujisaki then orders the proceedings to begin, sometimes without pausing to say "Good morning." There are two ten-minute breaks in the morning, a break for lunch, and two more breaks in the afternoon. Court adjourns promptly at four-thirty, day after productive day.

The figure who stands out most clearly in these regimented surroundings is Robert Baker, Simpson's lead lawyer. With a perfectly sculpted swirl of gray hair and impeccable suits, Baker looks like the kind of actor who always plays a senator in the movies. By his side is his son, Phillip, who is a junior lawyer in Baker's firm and a young duplicate of his father. Together, they whisper and snicker, father tutoring son in the art of contempt for the adversary. As often as not in this case, Bob Baker's adversary is Judge Fujisaki. Stout and fatigued, sixty but looking older, Fujisaki has none of the nervous hunger for public affection displayed by Judge Lance Ito in Simpson's murder trial, and even less of Ito's deference to the lawyers hired to defend Simpson. Fujisaki barely turns his head when he says "Overruled" to one of the Simpson team's many objections. The senior Baker, for his part, lacks Johnnie Cochran's silken adaptability to such momentary setbacks. Indeed, he has by now abandoned even the pretense of deference to the man who is making his life so difficult. On the day before Simpson was to take the stand in the civil case, Baker asked Fujisaki to delay the appearance for a weekend, to allow Simpson to "put his head on straight." Fujisaki weighed the request for a microsecond before rejecting it, and Baker sneered at the Judge in response: "Thanks for your consideration, Your Honor."

For the criminal trial, Baker's predecessors devised a famously daring defense strategy, claiming that O. J. Simpson was framed for murder by a conspiracy of racist police officers. From the beginning of the second trial, though, it has been clear that Robert Baker would have to take another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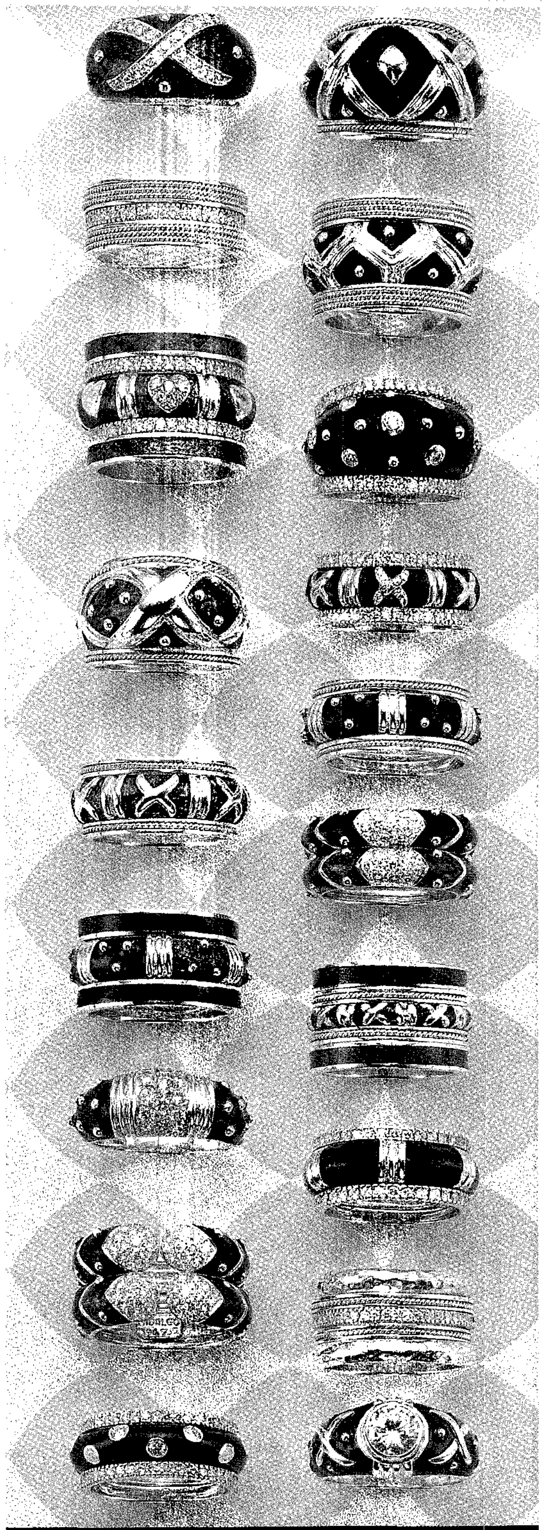

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approach. In part, this is because of rulings by Judge Fujisaki, who found the racism of Detective Mark Fuhrman and others to be irrelevant to the trial unless the defense could show that these men's views had a discernible impact on the investigation—something that it has failed to do. There is also the racial makeup of the people in Fujisaki's courtroom. There are just three black faces: the defendant, one juror, and one alternate. (In the atmosphere of obsessive census-taking that has come to envelop the Simpson legal saga, it is usually also noted that one juror is Hispanic and another is a "half-black, half-Asian Jamaican immigrant.") "The race card" is absent also because of the man who would be called upon to deal it. As a member of the exclusive Los Angeles Country Club, Robert Baker would have a certain credibility problem if he were to pose, the way Cochran did, as the deliverer of black Los Angeles from the depredations of the city's police.

But Baker has fashioned a defense that is, in its way, no less audacious than that offered by Cochran and Robert Shapiro. Simpson as black martyr is gone, replaced by Simpson as star. Baker's theory is that Simpson was too grand a celebrity—too irresistible to women—to have suffered over the departure of his ex-wife. The attempt is to turn the domestic-violence theme on its head. O.J. wasn't pursuing Nicole, the theory goes; she was after him.

BAKER specializes in defending insurance companies in medical-malpractice cases, so he is experienced in making uncomfortable arguments before juries. Lawyers like Baker have to say things like "The baby wasn't *so* brain-damaged by the hospital's error," and in this case he has had few qualms about disparaging the deceased. In his opening statement, on October 24th, Baker told the story of a marriage that was basically one of predator and prey, of Nicole pursuing O.J. According to Baker's highly selective account of their relationship, Nicole and O.J. separated for the first time in 1992, after seven years of marriage, and then O.J. became "Nicole's confidant." Baker said that Simpson steered his ex-wife through a variety of troubles—chiefly "boyfriend problems," including an unwanted pregnancy, which she terminated after seeking her ex-husband's counsel. By 1993, Baker said, Nicole had begun pursuing Simpson, attempting to revive their marriage. Baker read the jury a letter Nicole had written to O.J.: "I love you, I cherish you, and I want to make you smile." Simpson agreed to attempt a reconciliation, but Nicole made it difficult. "Nicole was having parties, visiting people . . . who were prostitutes, inviting drug dealers into his house with his—into her house with his children there," Baker said. Baker even made the jurors a promise: "You'll hear the name Heidi Fleiss, you'll hear 'prostitute,' you'll hear 'drugs.' It's all in there."

The implication of Baker's opening statement was that the killer came out of Nicole's sordid world (even if no evidence of any such connection has emerged in the two and a half years since the murders). But the subtext was even uglier—a twist on the formerly common defense of consent in rape cases. O.J. was a concerned dad, Nicole was a tramp. He was a star, she was a groupie. He played it safe, she took chances. In short, the bitch asked for it.

The sine qua non of Baker's strategy was Simpson's own testimony—just as his silence had been critical to the success of the race-card strategy in the criminal case. Head bowed at the defense table, Simpson could be transformed by Johnnie Cochran into the symbol of all black victimhood. If O.J. had taken the stand, Cochran could not have hidden his client's life of privilege and ease. But Simpson's life in Brentwood is indispensable to Baker's tack. Simpson would be as much exhibit as witness—so charming and desirable that the jury would have to dismiss the notion of him as the scorned and vengeful lover.

Baker's strategy had the additional advantage of requiring Simpson to do no more than show himself as he really is. Baker is right: Simpson is a star, even now. Around the Santa Monica courthouse, you can see the regulars—local lawyers, off-duty cops, surly clerks—hanging around the metal detectors and hoping for a glimpse of Simpson as he walks by. O.J. has been so famous for so long that he excels at the quick wink of acknowledgment, the feigned intimacy with strangers, the scribbled autograph. He charms everyone, even the usually stone-faced bailiffs who guard the courtroom. During breaks in Simpson's testimony last week, he made small talk with these sheriff's deputies, who smiled warmly at him as the jurors filed back into court. Roger Cossack, the co-host of CNN's "Burden of Proof," had dealt with Simpson only in passing before O.J. sidled up to him during a break early in the trial. "The first thing he said to me was 'So when are we playing golf?' " Cossack recalled for me. "And—you can't help it—you do think for a second, 'Hey, golf with O. J. Simpson!' " Still, Cossack never took him up on the offer.

FOR the few days of Simpson's testimony, the case provoked a media frenzy reminiscent of the first trial. From the quiet streets of Santa Monica, the satellite trucks beamed predawn reports to local television stations, and the technicians once more piled up O.J.-driven overtime. In the crush outside the courthouse after Simpson left the stand on Tuesday, Kim Goldman, Ron's sister, was hit on the head and bruised by an overaggressive cameraman. Inside the courtroom, the atmosphere was tense.

Simpson's adversaries tried hard to unnerve him on the witness stand. Fred Goldman, Ron's outspoken father, sat with his lawyers, right behind the podium, so Simpson had to look at Goldman during much of his three days of testimony. The Goldmans' lawyer, Daniel Petrocelli, who was the plaintiffs' main inquisitor, was immune to Simpson's charm. Petrocelli is fiercely bland—neither young nor old, handsome nor plain, tall nor short. A partner in a big corporate law firm, he handles the grisly familiar details of the Simpson case—the photographs of Nicole sprawled in a pool of blood, her trembling cries to a 911 operator—with the dispassion of a lawyer in a contracts case. In the weeks leading up to Simpson's testimony, Petrocelli's doggedness was obviously paying off. The plaintiffs' presentation of evidence rarely faced even mildly effective cross-examination, and witnesses who had taken days, or even weeks, on the stand before Judge Ito completed their testimony in a small fraction of that time in Santa Monica. Of course, the stakes in this case for Simpson are lower than they were in the criminal trial—money damages, not jail. But, still, by raising only a perfunctory defense to the DNA and other physical evidence the plaintiffs introduced, Baker was betting almost everything on the testimony of his client.

Petrocelli delivered his questions to Simpson with aggressive but businesslike precision. His task was to get the jury to see the other side of stardom—the narcissism, the malignant self-obsession that, according to the plaintiffs' theory, drove Simpson to kill what he could not have.

Petrocelli made a strong case that Simpson's account of the night of the murders—and of his life with Nicole—bore little relation to reality. The defendant's "story," as Petrocelli repeatedly referred to it, conflicted with telephone records, the recollections of other witnesses, and Simpson's own prior statements. The examination also illuminated the surreal nature of Simpson's celebrity existence. When Simpson returned to Los Angeles from New York two days before the murders, he said breezily, he had been carrying "at least seven thousand dollars in cash," and when he travelled to Chicago on the night of the murders he had left four or five thousand dollars in cash "underneath my sweater" in a walk-in closet. Petrocelli confronted Simpson with a passage from a quickie autobiography published in 1970: "OJ: The Education of a Rich Rookie." First, though, he asked if Simpson had been aware of his "image" in the public eye.

"Yeah," Simpson replied. "I always know people like me, yes."

"You wrote when you first began your football career, back in the first book that you authored, 'I have been praised, kidded, and criticized about being image-conscious. And I plead guilty to the charge.' True?"

"At that time, yes," Simpson replied.

"And you wrote that, quote, 'I tried all the images.' End of quote. True?"

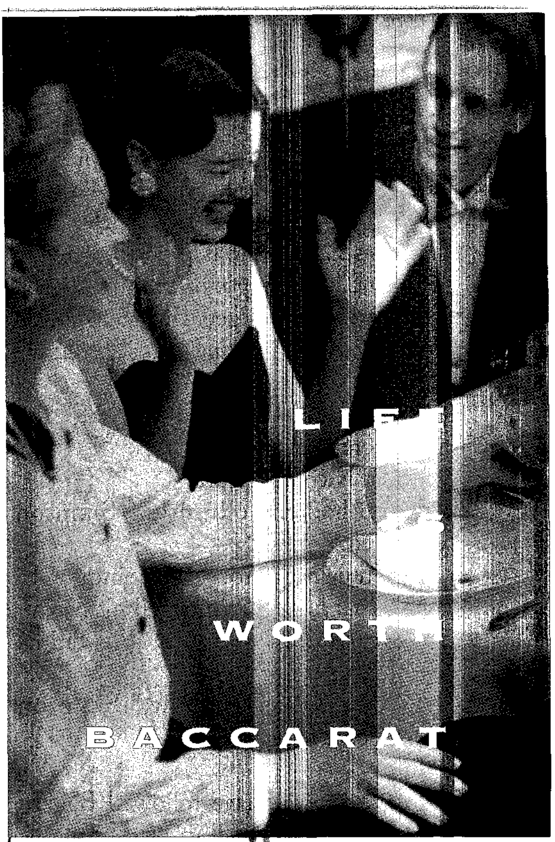
"I don't recall that, no."

"It's in your book," Petrocelli pursued.

"I didn't write the book," Simpson said, with some impatience. Petrocelli tried to clarify. The book had O. J. Simpson's name on it. Was Simpson saying that he didn't believe what the book said he believed? How much did he have to do with the book?

"In general, I O.K.'d the book," Simpson explained finally. "I think I read the galley of the book before it went to press."

Petrocelli confronted Simpson with



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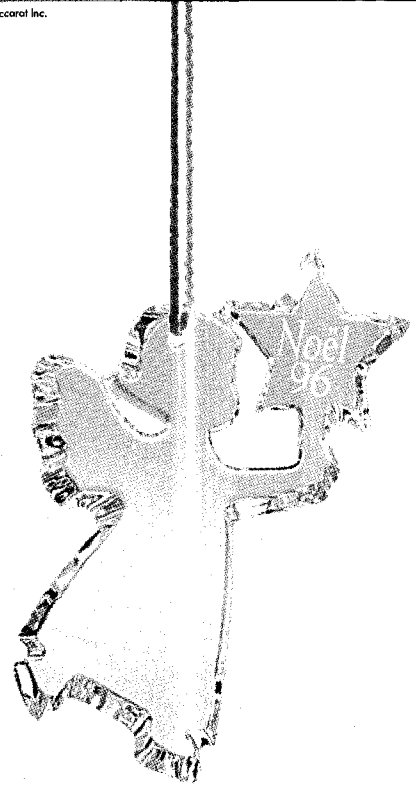

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an interview he gave to ESPN about a 1989 incident after which he pleaded no contest to beating Nicole. "We were both guilty," Simpson said in the 1989 broadcast. "No one was hurt, it was no big deal, and we both got on with our lives."

Petrocelli charged that Simpson's account of the beating was "absolutely false."

"I disagree with you on that," the witness replied.

"Did Nicole get hurt?"

"She had some bruises," Simpson conceded.

Eventually, Petrocelli got Simpson to admit that he had minimized his behavior in the ESPN interview. Why did he not tell the truth?

"It was a sports show," Simpson explained.

IN AN OLD GARDEN

Some cloudy, colorless November day,
When leaves are down and odd uneven gray
Lines show up where recently a lush
Wall of impenetrable underbrush
Obscured all sign of such impediments
As constitute a fieldstone garden fence,
With autumn over, winter unarrived,
You stumble on whatever has survived
Of old New England farms: the border cairns
That mark an orchard gone to woods; a barn's
Mere outline; perhaps a hollow to surprise
The foot, telling how wells internalize
Themselves; and—look!—one sky-blue cupid's dart
That given time will learn its rime by heart.

—George Bradley

SIMPSON may have followed Baker's strategy too well in his testimony. He longed to show off. During a break early in his testimony, he told Erik Menendez's defense lawyer, Leslie Abramson, who was seated in the media section, "I wish I could talk more." Unsurprisingly, Simpson forcefully denied committing the murders. But he wound up denying that he had engaged in *any* conduct that would diminish his stature before the jury. He presented himself as virtually flawless—as the celebrity of his own imagination. "I like to think I was a guy . . . people could come to," Simpson testified at one point last week. "I liked to treat everybody the way I wanted to be treated. My basic philosophy was 'Do unto others.' " When he was asked initially about violence in his marriage, the first thing he mentioned was that Nicole had hit him. He went on to deny that Nicole had been afraid of him on the night in 1993 when she called 911. "I will debate forever that she was not frightened of me that night," he said. Simpson even denied having ever hit Nicole. All Simpson would concede was that he had "rassled" with her—or, as he put it another time, had been "wrongly physical with her." Petrocelli's phlegmatic style served him well here.

Simpson raised his voice on just one occasion during his testimony. O.J. and Nicole divorced in mid-1992, and attempted a reconciliation about a year later. Petrocelli asked Simpson who had initiated the reconciliation. "She was incessably [sic] pursuing me," Simpson said.

O.J. returned to this theme several times, prompting Petrocelli to ask, "Are you sure you were not pursuing this time?"

"No. I think everyone, including our family, knows it was her pursuing me."

"You sure about that?"

"I think everybody knows that."

"I'm just asking if you're sure."

"I'm a thousand per cent sure," Simpson insisted.

"How many per cent?" Petrocelli asked, recognizing that the ferocity of Simpson's denials might convey the opposite of what he intended.

"A thousand per cent sure," Simpson repeated.

Moments later, Petrocelli mentioned a *National Enquirer* story from the fall of 1993 which stated that O.J. had begged Nicole to resume their relationship. "That really upset you?"

"Yes," Simpson said, at top volume. "It certainly did."

"And it upset you because it was false, right?"

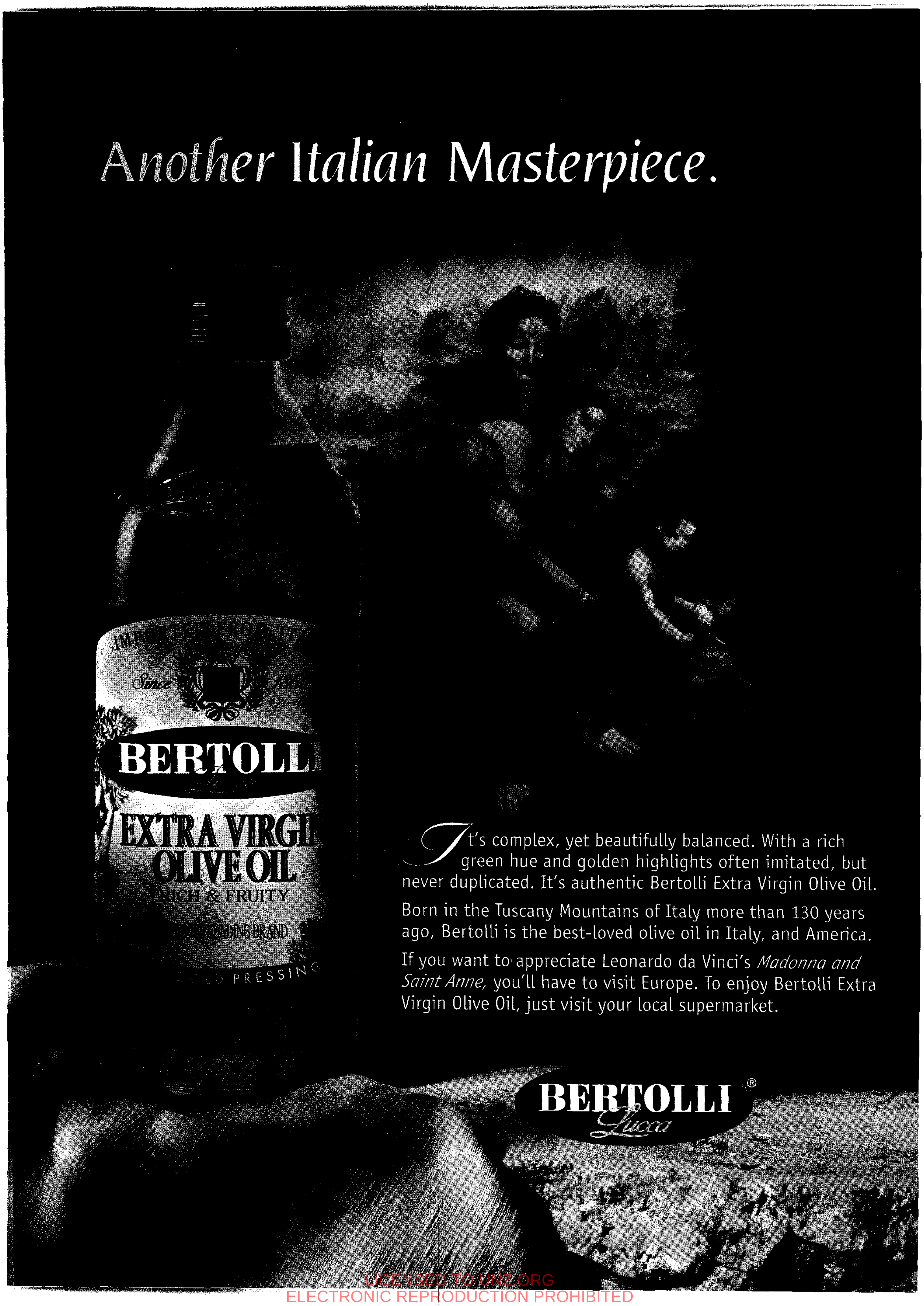
"Exactly. That's why it upset me."

Petrocelli knew where Simpson was going, and he didn't want to stand in the way. He asked, "She begged—you did not beg her?"

"Exactly right," came Simpson's chilling reply.

The contrast was striking. Simpson's demeanor was casual when he was accused of beating Nicole but furious when he was asked if he'd begged her. He had been famous for thirty years, the author (at least nominally) of an autobiography when he was just twenty-two. He could not abide the picture of himself as a vulnerable supplicant. He did not—would not—beg.

Baker did not question Simpson at all last week. He decided instead to present his client's full life story when the defense makes its case, probably later this month. By the end of Simpson's testimony, though, it appeared that he was offering little more than his idealized public image to refute the evidence against him. The defense came down to "Trust me." How did Simpson cut his hand on the night of the murders? He couldn't really say—except that he was sure that it wasn't in attacking Ron and Nicole. Wasn't he wearing the murderer's model of Bruno Magli shoes in a photograph several months before the crime? Simpson said that that was what the picture showed—but it was a doctored image. Wasn't that Simpson's blood at the murder scene, in his Bronco, and on his driveway? Simpson conceded that it was—and offered no explanation for how it got there. At one point, Petrocelli accused Simpson of acting in response to his questions. Hadn't he acted in television shows and movies? "I don't think I've ever called myself an actor in my life," Simpson replied. "I always said I was a personality." ♦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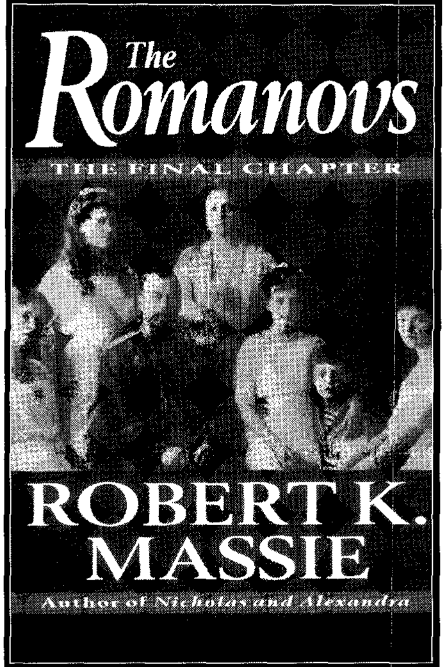

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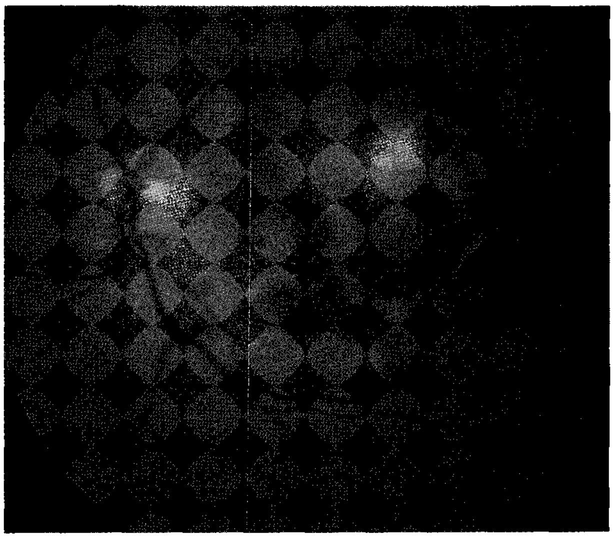
PERSONAL HISTORY

LOSING SIGHT

The most common cause of vision loss is also the least understood—and the author has spent five years battling it.

BY HENRY GRUNWALD

I TURN off the alarm clock and open my eyes. Everything is in place: the windows and doors, the mirrors, the desk, the dressing table. It all looks a little hazy, but that might just be because of the subdued morning light. I get out of bed, put on my glasses, and pick up the day's paper. I look at it, hard. The words are a blur. I cannot read. For a moment, I cannot believe this, because, after all, I do see a picture of the whole room—although not clearly and not in detail. The attempt to read brings me back to reality. After a lifetime during which reading and writing have been as natural and necessary as breathing, I now feel the visual equivalent of struggling for breath.



The author's damaged left retina, photographed in 1992.

COURTESY OF DAVID R. GUYER, M.D. AND LAWRENCE A. YANNUZZI, M.D.

The problem started five years ago, when my wife and I rented a villa outside Florence. The light in the house was inadequate, especially in rainy October weather. One afternoon, I poured a glass of water from a pitcher and missed the glass. I inveighed against the landlord, who, I thought, was trying to save electricity with impossibly weak light bulbs. Then I suspected that I might need new glasses. Back in New York, I dropped in on the nearest optician. A routine test showed that my left eye was almost totally useless. Alarmed, I went to an eye doctor, and he informed me that I was suffering from something called macular degeneration. Until that moment, I had never heard of it.

I have since discovered that a great many people—exact figures are hard to come by, but in the United States the number may be as high as fifteen million—are afflicted with this disease. It is formally known as age-related macular degeneration, or A.M.D., because most sufferers are over fifty. It is the most common cause of irreversible vision loss in the Western world. Yet it is one of the least commonly known eye problems; until recently, it was rarely written about in the popular press, or even discussed.

A search for experts in the field brought me to Vitreous-Retina-Macular Consultants of New York, a busy Manhattan group of nine doctors, among them Lawrence Yannuzzi and David Guyer. Yannuzzi is kinetic and affable, and he positively sprays scientific knowledge. Guyer is equally energetic but quiet and studious-looking, and has a more contained passion for his specialty. They undertook to give me a crash course in macular degeneration. It happens, they said, in the retina—a thin layer of millions of cells at the back of the eye which sends signals to the brain through the optic nerve. This is how we see. But sight is divided into two separate functions: peripheral vision and central vision. Central vision is required for straight-on and detailed seeing. It originates in a small area, a quarter of an inch wide, at the center of the retina, that is called the macula. A sign of danger is the appearance in the retina of age spots, called drusen. Much of the time, these remain harmless, but they can cause a thinning of the macula until it atrophies. This is known as the "dry" form of macular degeneration. The "wet" form of the condition, which is much less common but more serious, occurs when blood vessels in the back of the eye spread, break, leak, invade the retina, and gradually destroy the macula. My doctors told me that I was suffering from the wet form.

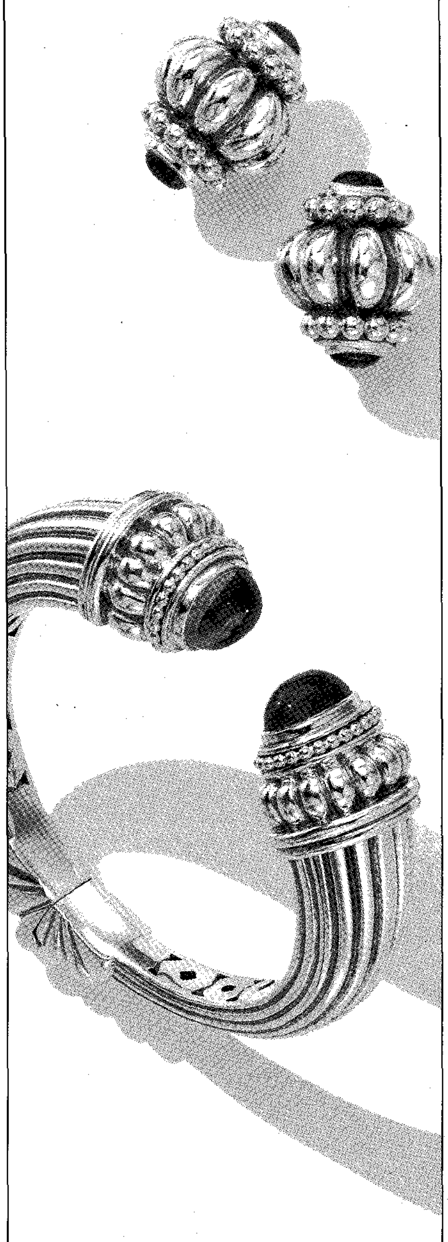
I was shocked to learn that it really wasn't treatable—at least, not with lasting effect. When I got the news, the vision in my left eye was 20/400—well below the mark for legal blindness, which is 20/200. My right eye, on the other hand, was nearly normal, at 20/30. What were the chances, I wanted to know, of the right eye going as well? From ten to fifteen per cent over a period of from three to five years, I was told. And what were the chances of my ending up totally blind? Very slight.

I was given a card showing a grid with a dot in the center. If, when you look at the grid, its lines seem to waver or the dot seems to disappear, macular degeneration is progressing. Every day before shaving, I stared at the card, first through my bad eye, then through my good one, nervously watching those lines and that dot. I carried the card with me and occasionally peered at it during the day. One afternoon, just as I was feeling confident that my right eye was safe, I covered my left eye and stared at the card, and the lines bent as if I were looking at them through heat waves. I rushed to my doctors, and they spotted some bleeding in my right eye. They recommended laser treatment.

This procedure consists of shooting a beam at the leaking blood vessels in order to seal them off, at least temporarily. It can be carried out in only about fifteen per cent of cases. In the others, the damaged vessels are directly behind the center of the macula or very close to it, so that the beam could completely destroy central vision. I was nervous as I settled into a chair in a darkened room and faced the familiar machine used for eye examinations. A laser device was mounted on it. My head was supported by a chin rest and held in place by a strap. On the opposite side of the device was Dr. Guyer. His left hand held a tubular lens against my right eye. (The lens was developed by Yannuzzi and bears his name.) Guyer's right hand was on a joystick that would aim the laser beam at my eye. If that hand slipped or if my eye moved, the laser could do serious damage. (I learned later that in ancient India any eye surgeon who botched an operation had his nose cut off by way of punishment.) Guyer was entirely calm, working from a kind of photographic map, known as a fluorescein angiogram, that had been made earlier; making it involves injecting a dye into a vein in the arm, from which it spreads through the body and to the eyes, enabling a special camera to photograph the retina. His voice was soothing as he admonished me not to move. Flash. Blinding light struck my eye. His voice kept murmuring, "Good . . . fine . . . very good." Was *I* being good? Or did Guyer mean that *he* was being good? After three minutes or so, it was over. Later, Yannuzzi described the procedure as being "like splitting a diamond."

Within six weeks, when I looked at the card with my right eye the lines did not waver markedly. The laser surgery had been successful. But five months after the treatment the distortion appeared once again, prompting another diamond-splitting. It, too, was described as a success, but this time I was less sanguine. I tried to imagine what it would be like if my condition grew so bad that I could no longer read, or watch a movie, a television program, a play. To my wife I said, "I could live with that as long as I could still get about on my own." To myself I said, "There are worse things than this." And "There are worse things" became a mantra.

I WAS referred to a support group, the Association for Macular Diseases, run by Nikolai Stevenson, an affable former sugar broker and Second World War veteran. (He was a company commander in the 1st Marine Division in the landing on Guadalcanal.) Nick has suffered from the disease for eighteen years. Despite his handicap, he travels tirelessly around the country organizing symposiums about how to cope with it—especially with the emotional consequences. Most people who have macu-



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lar degeneration experience depression, and Stevenson believes that therapists generally aren't much help. "We must work it out for ourselves," he said. "This doesn't close the book of life."

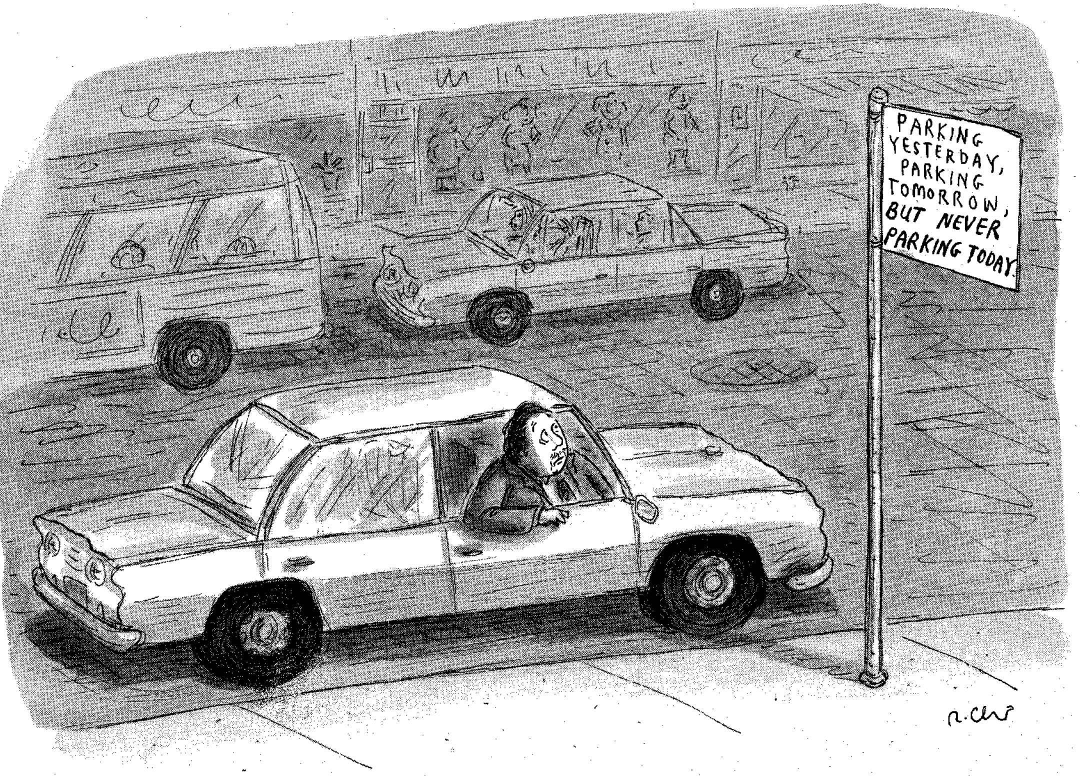
For a while after my second laser treatment, my condition alternately improved and deteriorated; it depended, I was told, on the unpredictable and uncontrollable behavior of the cells in my eye. During a trip I took to India in January, 1994, things got worse. India is a marvel to the eye, but the dazzling colors of the saris and banners faded, and the embankments of the Ganges grew indistinct. Back in New York, I was given two more laser treatments. Now an odd switch occurred. The right eye continued to deteriorate, but the left eye began to improve. "Sometimes when one eye gets hurt, the other eye will kick in," Guyer explained. "When you have perfect vision in one eye, you don't use the other so much. When the right eye came down, the left eye used everything it had. It hadn't needed to use it before."

A hopeless enthusiast for gadgets, I plunged into the realm of visual aids: magnifiers with built-in lights; reading lamps with lenses attached. I turned them and twisted them, held them close to the page and farther away, struggling to go on reading. There were good days and bad days. A paragraph read was a triumph; a sentence undeciphered was a blow. As a writer and editor, I felt an almost physical link with words, and had often read with a pencil in hand. Now the words kept fading, and I tried grimly to hold on to them. I bought a magnifying machine, a sort of closed-circuit video with a camera that enlarges the text on a screen. The thing was so laborious to use that it took away all my pleasure.

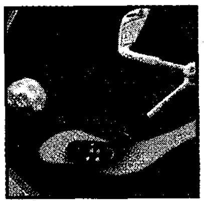
In search of still more "low vision" gadgets, I went to the Lighthouse, the noted institution for the blind and the visually impaired, on East Fifty-ninth Street. I had walked past the gleaming building many times and had always thought of it as a place where people made baskets and tapped along corridors with white canes. I had never thought of it as a place for *me*. I entered with trepidation, and was immediately humbled by the signs in large print and in Braille, by the recorded voice in the elevator that announced each floor—a cushioned world for the sightless. There was a bright boutique full of talking alarm clocks and talking scales, and Scrabble and Monopoly sets with large letters. I met specialists there, like Dr. Bruce Rosenthal, the chief of low-vision programs, who has written widely on macular degeneration. A bouncy, dynamic man, he presided over a huge inventory of prescription visual aids, and almost every time I revisited his office he greeted me with an eager "I've got something new to show you!" Under his guidance, I experimented with monoculars for outdoor vision, binoculars mounted on spectacles for the theatre or the opera, and extra-thick glasses, which required the object of vision to be held no more than an inch away.

Querulously, I asked why there hadn't been more progress in this field. Rosenthal assured me that all kinds of vision enablers were being developed. One was something called L.V.E.S. (for "low-vision-enhancement system")—a kind of helmet with tiny built-in TV cameras that enlarged the surrounding scene. With its power pack strapped on, I found the device much too cumbersome. I tried other aids, with little success. I would have to accept the fact that, short of some extraordinary breakthrough, nothing could ever replace the infinitely intricate web of cells in the eye.

MACULAR degeneration means living in a veiled world. I could still see a sunrise, mountains, buildings—could, in fact, see almost everything—but always through a haze. I could see the outlines of people, but in the absence of strong light their faces were a blur. Arriving one evening at a favorite Chinese restaurant, I walked up to a figure I took to be the maître d' and offered my hand. The statue of a monkey did not return my greeting. Unwittingly, I cut old friends dead; total strangers I often greeted as old friends. In Paris, accompanying my wife to a couture house I strayed into the fitting room by mistake. Before beating a hasty retreat, I noticed a half-dressed woman trying on a gown. My wife told me later that the woman I'd walked in on was Catherine Deneuve, whom I had adored from afar for years.


PARKING YESTERDAY, PARKING TOMORROW, BUT NEVER PARKING TODAY

It has become nearly impossible to make eye contact, and that loss is particularly unnerving. I have trained myself to look in the direction of voices—something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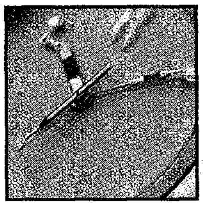
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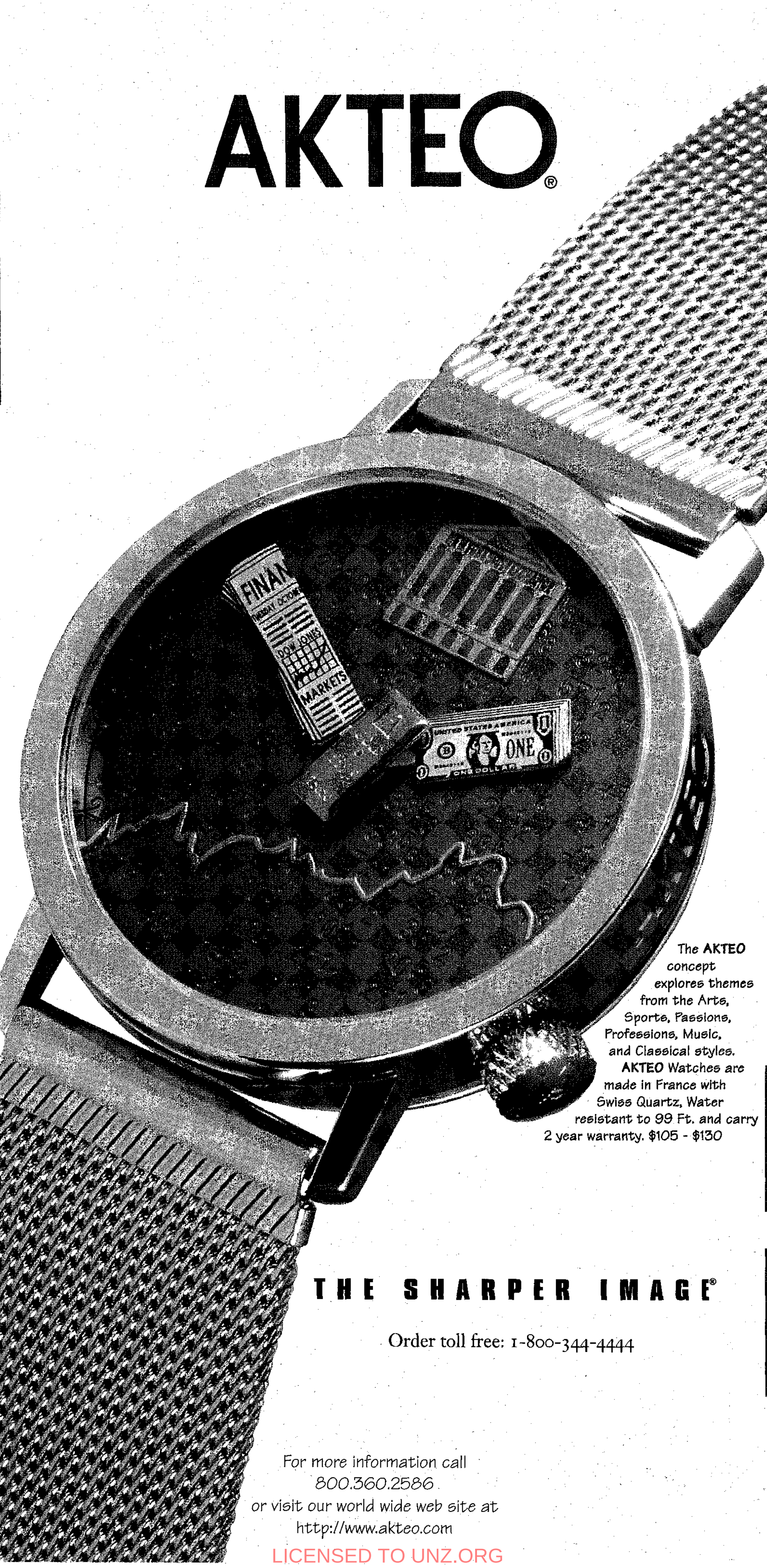
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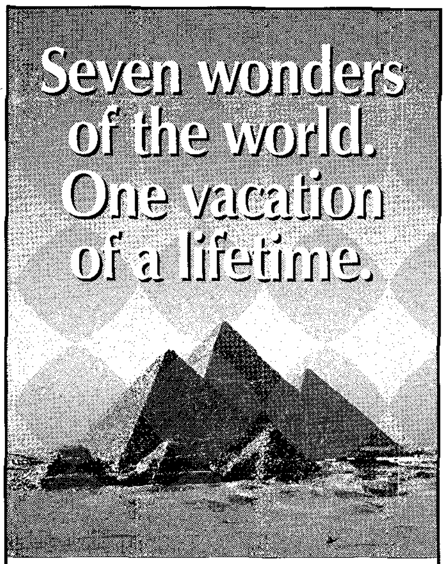

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difficult to do when several people are talking at the same time. It's hard to distinguish colors; I'm apt to put on brown socks with a blue suit. Eating is a problem now, because in the illumination of most dining rooms and restaurants the food in front of me is more or less unidentifiable: I've taken a bite out of a lemon, assuming it to be a shrimp; I've tried to slice a bone instead of the meat; locating a salt shaker on the table is a major challenge. Stairs are a hazard, and the constant worry about tripping makes me feel horribly decrepit. However, when I do encounter familiar or brightly lit steps, I skip down them ostentatiously. Sight gives independence. I find it hard to ask people to help me serve myself at table or to steer me to the right seat on a plane. I've had to come to terms with the fact that in some situations it's stupid not to ask for help—for instance, when adding up a restaurant bill. But I also recognize the temptation to take the easy way out—to let somebody else do things for me which, with a little effort, I could do for myself. I move around New York as much as ever, but with a healthy caution crossing streets. During a recent trip to Egypt, I crawled into tombs with a flashlight resembling a miner's lamp strapped to my forehead. I continue to go to museums on the theory that a vague Cézanne is better than none. My head is almost up against the screen when I watch television.

NOT until my vision problems developed did I realize just how dependent I was on reading, not only for work and pleasure but in countless other ways: noting shop signs, deciphering labels in the medicine cabinet. Scanning, or taking sight bites, has become nearly impossible. More and more, I've become dependent on the spoken word, relying on the lending services of the Library of Congress and the Reading for the Blind program, as well as on the commercial firm Books on Tape, which has a good catalogue of unabridged titles. I avoid the trade publishers' audio releases for new books—many of which are cruelly abridged. Listening to poor readers is a trial. On the other hand, the more skilled the reader, the more likely he is to impose his own impersonation of a character in a novel—an impersonation that can be irritatingly at odds with the character in my imagination.

I've tested an impressive machine that one can feed pages into and have them read back in a computerized voice, but I prefer human sound. My wife often reads to me, and I've hired people to record newspaper and magazine articles. One problem with such recorded matter is that it's impossible to skim a tape as one skims a book. Another problem is that the substance of what is being said doesn't stick as well. In Plato's dialogue "Phaedrus," the god Thamus warns that the discovery of writing will "create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories." He was probably right, considering that most of us remember less of what we hear than of what we read.

As a writer, I have sometimes sounded out a word before putting it down. Nevertheless, I always tended to think of the written word as something solidly constructed, whereas the spoken word seemed evanescent—written on air. I became acutely aware of this while I was writing my autobiography. I worked on my word processor for as long as I could, but when it became too difficult to make out the words on the screen I switched to dictation. Talking a book was arduous. Every line had to be read back to me by my long-suffering assistant or printed out in large type. Yet there is something to be said for writing out loud. Hearing my words as I spoke them (while trying to visualize the text) or having them read back to me, I often realized how prolix or repetitive I was. A literate friend predicted that in the finished book there would be a discernible difference between the parts I had written and the parts I had dictated; as things turned out, he was wrong. I found that, despite my fears, I was still on close terms with words, but they had become more elusive companions.

ONE of the most frustrating aspects of macular degeneration is that it remains a mystery. No one is quite sure why those blood vessels break and leak, although there are many theories, heredity, smoking, and alcohol among them. As a result, the search for treatment is making scant progress. Several leading eye institutes have initiated studies to explore whether laser therapy can be used preventively. Radiation is being tried. Many places are experimenting with surgery. Two doctors in St. Louis have removed damaged blood vessels with special forceps—a highly risky procedure. Elsewhere, researchers are attempting to detach and rotate the retina to reposition the macula. Still other researchers are working to replace damaged cells of the retina with healthy ones through transplants. The trouble is that the retina involves more than a million fibres, and trying to connect the ones leading to the brain is a daunting task. “It’s a nightmare with all the spaghetti there,” David Guyer said. “But it’s no longer science fiction.”

The greatest promise seems to lie not in surgery but in drugs that will inhibit the growth of abnormal blood vessels. Guyer recently ran a yearlong, nationwide trial of the cancer drug interferon, in which I was one of five hundred guinea pigs. But the trial failed to produce positive results. Guyer and other specialists are most excited by the discovery of a chemical called VEGF (vascular endothelial growth factor), which is thought to cause the proliferation of blood vessels. A study of an experimental antibody is planned for next year.

My own condition has improved considerably—and unexpectedly—during the past year. This was owing partly to cataract surgery. (A cataract, a clouding of the eye lens, is unrelated to macular degeneration but further impairs vision.) Another cause was an apparent stabilization of my condition—something that occurs occasionally without any real explanation. My left eye is now back to 20/70. This enables me to read normal print again and to write in longhand, provided that the light is good—but hazily, slowly, and, so far, for short periods. There is, however, no guarantee that this improvement will last.

Every day, I remind myself that living organisms existed for hundreds of millions of years before developing anything that could be called eyes. In myth, blindness has often been linked with special wisdom or inner sight. In our day, the eye has been mostly, yet not entirely, demythologized. James Thurber, who suffered from poor eyesight for most of his life and eventually became totally blind, wrote about the “peculiar advantages” of defective vision. He would see a cat rolling across the street in a striped barrel or bridges rising into the air like balloons. These were ordinary objects that his failing eyes turned into fantasy. “The kingdom of the partly blind is a little like Oz, a little like Wonderland,” he wrote. For me, the kingdom is not nearly so enchanting. I miss the hard edges—the details in the Cézanne, the small, remote bridge in the countryside, the smile on a face a few feet away. I find it unsettling not to be able to make out the details of my own face in the mirror.

Living in the kingdom of the partly blind does not affect the brain so much as the spirit. I have fought off depression largely by defiance, by a refusal—almost exhilarating at times—to be defeated by those mysteriously leaking cells. And I keep in mind a remark made to me by Nick Stevenson, my fellow-resident in this hazy world: “To restore our emotional balance, we have only to put both hands over our eyes.” ♦

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PROFILE

THE IMPERFECTIONIST

Why is Woody Allen singing in his new movie, and how did he survive the scandal?

BY JOHN LAHR

In the television alcove of Woody Allen's book-lined and flower-filled Fifth Avenue duplex penthouse is a framed letter from Arthur Conan Doyle which mentions Houdini, the great escapologist. The letter was a paper-wedding-anniversary present from wife No. 2, the actress Louise Lasser, but to Allen its meaning is more than sentimental. Allen, who had a childhood fascination with magic—"To be able to perform a little miracle was such a heady feeling, something worth practicing endless hours for," he told me during a four-day conversation this fall—is also interested in great escapes, particularly his own. Like Broadway Danny Rose, Allen is "strictly pavement," and metropolitan to his marrow, but his airy apartment is a rustic cocoon: an open tiled fireplace, kerosene lamps, wicker baskets full of logs, polished pine floors, walls covered with Early American folk art. Even his writing room is not the unkempt, minimalist sump his movies might lead you to expect, but is dominated by a four-poster bed, under whose blue calico canopy he likes to sprawl and write, overseen on the bedside table by framed photographs of Cole Porter, Sidney Bechet, and Fyodor Dostoyevski—all, like him, technicians of distraction and delight.

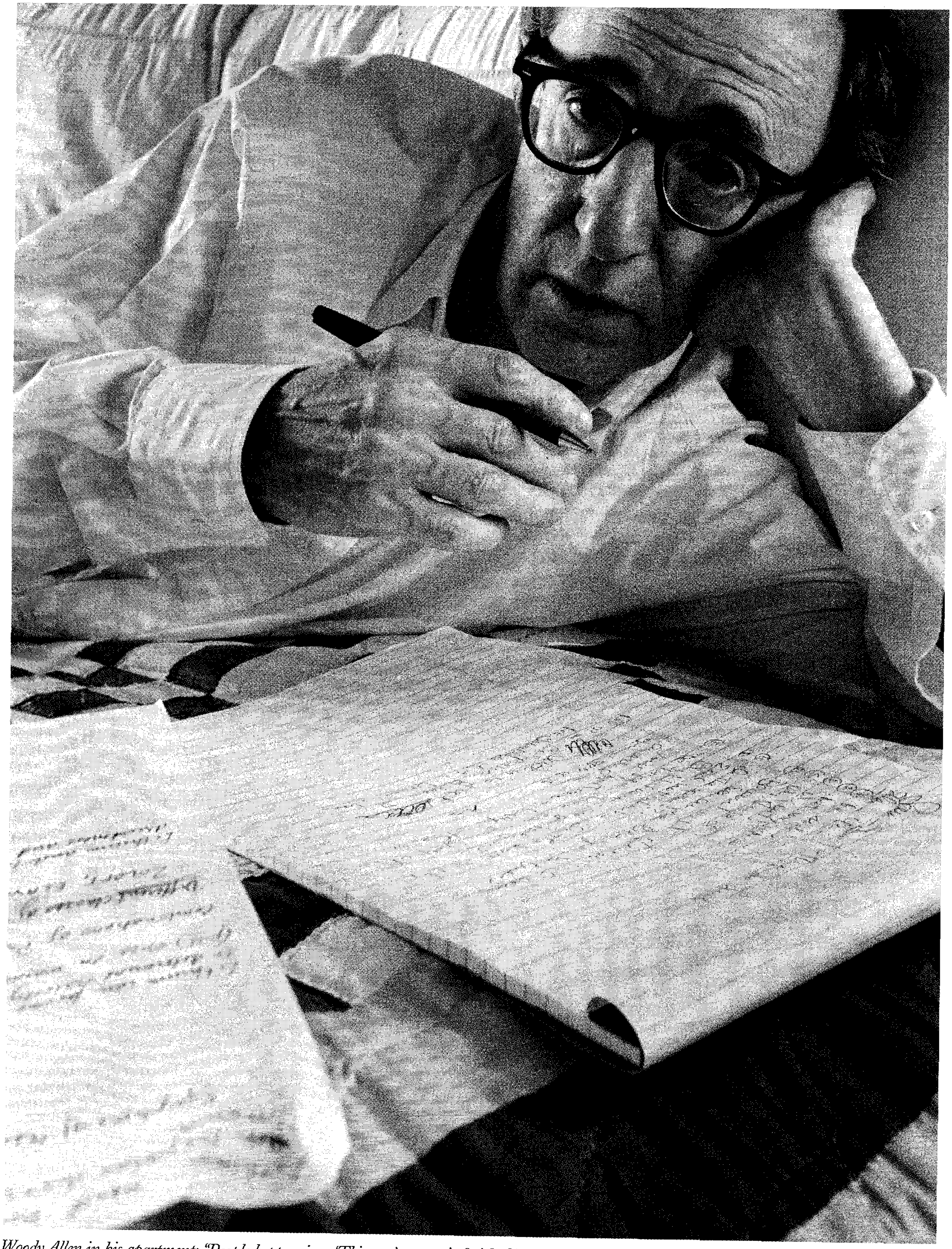
When he is not closeted at home, Allen is locked away about twelve blocks south, manufacturing the illusion of himself at the Manhattan Film Center, which consists of a three-room editing suite at the far end of a dusky marble corridor on the ground floor of the former Beekman Hotel, on Park Avenue at Sixty-third Street. A large, low-ceilinged screening room, wallpapered in olive-green brushed velvet, with an olive-green carpet, and eight olive-green chairs pressed against one wall, serves Allen variously as audition hall, conference room, and clubhouse. At one end, behind a curtain, is a film screen; at the other end, on a little dais, is an old drab-green couch, whose left side, where Allen sits, has been worn through to its cotton lining.

At first, in this subterranean green-brown stillness, he is hard to take in. He is small, to be sure (he claims to be "tall" at five feet seven), and is dressed in his familiar unprepossessing tweed and corduroy, but there's a difference between the magician and his bag of tricks. Allen does not stammer. He is not uncertain of what he thinks. He is not full of jokes or bon mots, and when he is amused he is more likely to say "That's funny" than to smile. He is courteous but not biddable. He is a serious, somewhat morose person who rarely raises his voice, who listens carefully, and who, far from being a sad sack, runs his career and his business with admirable, single-minded efficiency.

Even when he was growing up, Allen was more formidable than he liked to show; the dissimulation of powerlessness appealed to him in the same way that the fantasy of being invisible gives a thrilling sense of power. "I didn't want to play Bogart," he says. "I didn't want to play John Wayne. I wanted to be the schnook. The guy with the glasses who doesn't get the girl, who can't get the girl but who's amusing." Allen admits that in fact he was never a nebbish, never that shlub in his classic standup routine who goes to an interfaith camp "where I was sadistically beaten by boys of all races and creeds." He was a good athlete at school (a medal winner in track, a lead-off hitter and second baseman in baseball, a schoolyard-basketball player). And, contrary to his standup role as a social nudnik, Allen "wasn't a guy who was totally devoid of feminine companionship or couldn't get a date." In a sense, Allen's fiction has succeeded too well: the public won't divorce him from his film persona. "I'm not that iconic figure at all," he says. "I'm very different from that."

The real Allen holds himself in reserve. He is, like all great funny men, inconsolable; there is a boundary he draws around himself to protect himself and others from his sense of absence, which is palpable in his weak handshake, in the mildness of his voice, and in his subdued mien. Allen's antidote to anxiety is action: he saves his energy for the distraction of work, and his work ethic evolved early. "As an aspiring playwright in my late teens, I would meet some comedians, and I was taken by the fact that they all seemed to have a million distractions," he says. "I thought to myself, The guy who's gonna come out at the end of the poker game with the chips is the guy who just focusses and works." He adds, "You have to just work. You can't read your reviews. Just keep quiet. Don't get into arguments with anybody. Be polite, and do what you want to do, but keep working." Onscreen, Allen is a loser who makes much of his inadequacy; offscreen, he has created over the years the most wide-ranging œuvre in American entertainment. He is a standup-comedy star, the author of three volumes of classic *New Yorker* casuals and five plays (including two Broadway hits), an actor, and, of course, a writer-director of movies. His newest film, "Everyone Says I Love You," is a musical, and one of his most radiant works. (It opens at the Sony Lincoln Square Theatre, in New York, on December 6th and will run for one week in order to be eligible for the Academy Awards; it goes on general release in late January.) His next film, "Deconstructing Harry," is already in production. This will bring the total of Allen's feature films to twenty-seven, which averages out to one a year since 1969, when he started making movies and mass-marketing his anxieties.

"I've never felt Truth was Beauty. Never," Allen says. "I've always felt that

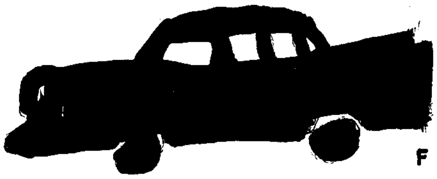


Woody Allen in his apartment: "People kept saying, 'This guy's career is finished.' I thought, You must be joking." Photograph by Arnold Newman.

people can’t take too much reality. I like being in Ingmar Bergman’s world. Or in Louis Armstrong’s world. Or in the world of the New York Knicks. Because it’s not this world. You spend your whole life searching for a way out. You just get an overdose of reality, you know, and it’s a terrible thing.” He adds, “I’m always fighting against reality.” Recently, however, reality got much uglier for Allen. In August of 1992, the news broke of his love affair with the twenty-one-year-old Soon-Yi Previn, one of the eleven children of his frequent collaborator and longtime companion Mia Farrow, with whom Allen has two adopted children—Moses, who is eighteen, and a daughter, Dylan, who is eleven—and one biological son, nine-year-old Satchel. Throughout the brutal war between him and Farrow, a scorched-earth campaign of unseemly primal betrayals on both sides which was played out in the tabloids in 1992 and 1993, Allen remained an omnipresent part of the culture’s dreamtime. In the press, he was under siege; in his writing room, he was prolific. He finished “Husbands and Wives”; he wrote and directed “Bullets Over Broadway,” “Manhattan Murder Mystery,” and “Mighty Aphrodite”; he starred in a television version of his first Broadway hit, “Don’t Drink the Water”; and he never missed a day—“not a single Monday”—of playing jazz at Michael’s Pub. “He’s *very* intransigent—in the best sense of the word,” says the director Sydney Pollack, who turned in a splendid acting performance as one of the self-deceived spouses in “Husbands and Wives.” “For all the mild-manneredness, the Mr. Peepers thing, I have always felt he was a very strong man.” In the midst of his crisis, Allen didn’t go completely underground. “He refuses to stay off the streets, no matter how many people recognize him,” Pollack says. “It’s a pain in the ass for him. But he needs to move around in life all the time.” As Allen once joked, “I hate reality, but, you know, where else can you get a good steak dinner?”

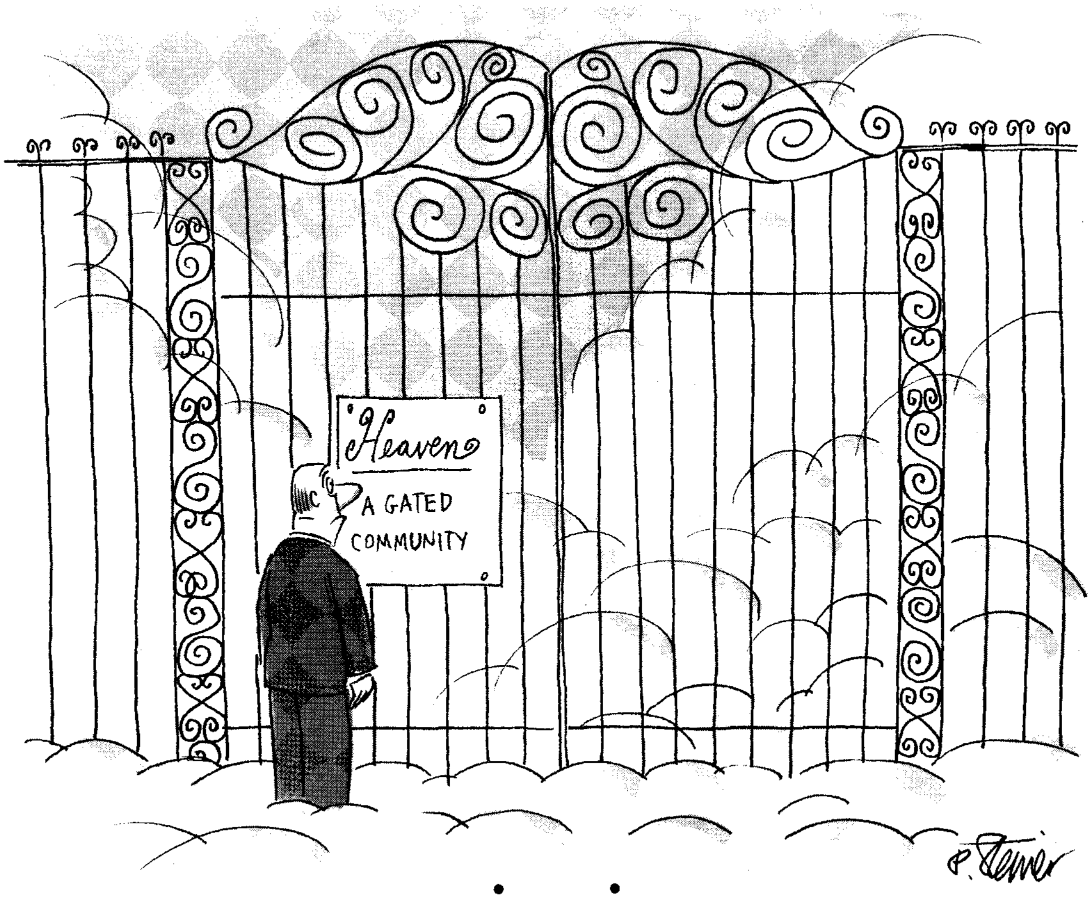
In “Stardust Memories” (1980), the character played by Allen, a movie director named Sandy Bates, declared a moratorium on funny business. “I don’t want to make funny movies anymore,” Bates says. “I . . . you know, I don’t feel funny. I—I look around the world, and all I see is human suffering.” Allen had decided to serve up more serious fare to his moviegoing audience. He says, “I was gonna do films that had a harder edge, like ‘Husbands and Wives.’ If I wanted to make a film like ‘Shadows and Fog,’ I was not in any way going to live out my end of the contract with the audience. I was gonna break that contract. I hoped that they would come with me, but they didn’t.” In an essay about Allen, the film critic Richard Schickel suggests that the audience left Allen, but Allen disagrees. “I left my audience is what really happened; they didn’t leave me,” he says. “They were as nice as could be. If I had kept making ‘Manhattan’ or ‘Annie Hall’—the same kind of pictures—they were fully prepared to meet me halfway.” But Allen defiantly refused. “Stardust Memories” made the point in its penultimate moment, when a disgruntled member of the audience, an old Jewish man, exits from the screening of a Sandy Bates movie. “From this he makes a living?” he says. “I like a melodrama, a musical comedy with a plot.”

Now, sixteen years later, Allen has made that musical comedy with a plot and, incidentally, put a big deposit in the karmic bank. “Everyone Says I Love You” is a capriccio—Allen’s wry version of an all-singing, all-dancing “champagne comedy,” played out on the elegant avenues of New York, Paris, and Venice, starring Goldie Hawn, Alan Alda, Julia Roberts, Drew Barrymore, Tim Roth, and the old Ghost of Christmas Past himself. Here, in the world of pure money, Allen re-creates the sense of escapism which is his most vivid memory of moviegoing as a youngster in Brooklyn in the forties and fifties, “where no one’s ever at a loss for the right phrase and everything comes out right at the end.” Allen goes on, “After the double feature, you’d walk out again at four o’clock in the afternoon and suddenly the horns would be honking and the sun would be shining and it would be ninety degrees, and it wouldn’t be Fredric March and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. I personally felt I wanted to grow up, move into Manhattan, and live like that. I wanted to pop champagne corks and have a white telephone and trade ever-ready quips.” The world of “Everyone Says I Love You”—where mannequins in shopwindows dance, where love almost always finds a way, where even the dead rise in ghostly chorus to sing “Enjoy Yourself (It’s Later Than You Think)”—is meant to be an anodyne for both the audience and the author. “I had a pretty tough time for a year or two in there,” Allen says, referring to his recent domestic troubles, which give urgency and poignancy to the film’s bittersweet but unrepentant gaiety about lost love and new love. “His heart is opening,” Goldie Hawn, who plays Woody’s ex-wife in the movie, says; she compares him to “an armadillo” emerging from his protective carapace. Even Allen admits, “Perhaps in some way my relationship with Soon-Yi has had a salubrious effect. I’m willing to play more or be more playful.” He says, “I thought, I want to enjoy myself. I want to hear those songs from over the decades that I loved so much. I want to see these people on Fifth Avenue and Park Avenue. It comes from what I wish the world was really like.”



The lavish world of the musical denies emptiness and loss, but as a child growing up in Flatbush, Allen, who was born Allan Konigsberg, was visited early by what he once called “the bluebird of unhappiness.” Allen has joked about his family’s values being “God and carpeting”; what dominates his memories of his “lower-lower-middle-class” family is his warring, volatile parents, whose unhappy vibes “were there all the time as soon as I could understand anything.” (He was the firstborn; his beloved sister, Letty Aronson, who is a co-executive-producer of “Everyone Says I Love You,” followed eight years later, in 1943.) “They were surviving. They were people of the Depression. They had no time for foolishness,” he says of his parents, who were not so much hostile to him as indifferent.

The feeling was mutual. “I spent my time in my room,” Allen says. “I never felt that either of my parents was amusing in the slightest way.” He rarely used his parents as an audience for his magic tricks and never for his jokes. “That would have been like serving tennis balls into the ocean,” he says. “I loved my parents. I do love them. But I had no interest in currying favor with them. I had other fish to fry at a very young age.” (Martin and Nettie Konigsberg are now ninety-six and ninety, and live close to Allen. “I saw them this morning,” he says. “It’s the same thing. I’m sixty years old and I’ll be standing in front of my parents now, I mean now, and they’ll still say, ‘Oh, come



on, get a haircut. You look terrible.' " He adds, "They've stayed together out of spite.") By her own admission, Nettie was "very strict." "I remember you would hit me every day when I was a child," Allen is recorded saying to her in a documentary interview that is excerpted in Eric Lax's 1991 biography of Allen. His mother replies, in part, "I was very strict, which I regret. Because if I hadn't been that strict, you might have been a more, a not so impatient . . . you might have been a—what should I say? Not better. You're a good person. But, uh, maybe softer, maybe warmer."

"Everyone Says I Love You" reverses the gravity of Allen's past and acts out the importance of illusion to psychic survival. "In the end, we are earthbound," he says, explaining humor's ability to "defy all that pulls you down, that eventually pulls you all the way down." He goes on, "The comedian is always involved in that attempt somehow, through some artifice or trick, to get you airborne. Being able to suggest that something magical is possible, that something other than what you see with your eyes and your senses is possible, opens up a whole crack in the negative." "Everyone Says I Love You" does just that; and, by my lights, it belongs in the canon of Allen's best comic work: "The Purple Rose of Cairo" (one of his own favorites), "Broadway Danny Rose," "Annie Hall," "Hannah and Her Sisters." "Now, I'm gonna level with you," begins the narrator, a flirtatious seventeen-going-on-thirty-seven-year-old called D.J., which in this swank world is short for Djuna. "We are not the typical kind of family you'd find in a musical comedy. For one thing, we got dough. And we live right here on Park Avenue in a big apartment—a penthouse." On the contrary, the wealthy lawyer stepfather and his radical-chic wife with their household of bumptious and precocious kids, a gaga grandfather, and a Prussian cook are exactly the elegant folderol you expect to find in a musical. Here, carrying the well-written story forward, is a shrewdly chosen selection of standards, including "Just You, Just Me," "My Baby Just Cares for Me," "I'm Thru with Love," and "Makin' Whoopee," all sung by the actors (except Drew Barrymore, who is dubbed). Allen, who says, "I never, ever sing, not even with my jazz band," here sings a few bars of "I'm Thru with Love"—an event that does for pessimism what Chaplin's speaking did for silence. "I've locked my heart / I'll keep my feelings there," Allen intones, in a stanza whose meanings speak beyond the film's moment. "I've stocked my heart / With icy frigidaire." Allen never looks into the camera as he delivers the words, but his cracked, reedy voice finds a perfect pitch for loss and isolation. "I used to tell Mia all the time that I wish everybody sang in life as in a musical," Allen says. "Because you get transported into a world that is a better world than the one I live in. There's a certain tenderness and affirmation."

ALLEN is naturally a fan of Chaplin, and Chaplin is honored in Allen's living room by a rare photograph from his vaudeville days. Like Allen, Chaplin created joy out of the morbidity of solitude; his Charlie, like Allen's Woody, was a metaphor for his era. Their behavior is informed by many similar qualities: both are self-educated, reclusive, melancholy, and meticulous; both are comic geniuses who give life without actually loving it. But the differences in their styles are instructive. Allen disagrees with the argument that silent comedy was harder to do because the comedians had to get laughs without the benefit of sound. "My contention has always been that silent films were easier because they were working with one simple thing—the visual," he says. "But once you got out of the visual with sound and it became less abstract and more realistic and you heard the comedian's words, guys like Keaton and Chaplin were not at all funny. It's much harder when you speak."

Allen tried speaking his words onstage for the first time in October, 1960, in a one-night audition at New York's Blue Angel. "I had unusual stagefright," Allen says. "I didn't have vomiting, but I couldn't eat all day long from the thought that at ten o'clock that night I was gonna go onstage." For the previous eight years, since he was seventeen, he had progressed rapidly from writing gossip-column gags for a press agency to writing sketch material with such masters of this arcane

HOT & COLD HEROS
COFFEE SH

craft as Danny Simon, Larry Gelbart, and Mel Brooks. Originally, Allen seemed to just read his jokes to the audience. His manager at the time, Jack Rollins (who had discovered and managed, among others, Mike Nichols and Elaine May), recalls that he and his partner, Charles Joffe, who are now Allen's co-executive producers, "would howl with laughter" when Allen read his material. "He would be deadpan. It just broke us up." He adds, "The absence of shtick." Rollins convinced Allen that for the jokes to go over they had to be delivered with personality, and that required a performance. "He had no—zero—experience as a performer," Rollins says. "He would recite his stuff like a child doing show-and-tell. It was mechanical, lifeless, bloodless, monotonous. But the material was brilliant."

In 1954, also at the Blue Angel, the nineteen-year-old Allen had been blown away by Mort Sahl and his conversational style. "It was the greatest thing I'd ever seen," Allen says. "People thought he was a great writer and not a great deliverer, but they're completely wrong. He was so skillful that you thought he was just talking."

Sahl created what Allen calls "the illusion of naturalness"; Allen created the illusion of haplessness. In his first night out, he stepped up to the microphone and, in his nasal voice, began to embellish on his short-lived student days at N.Y.U., where he'd actually earned an F in English and a C-minus in Motion Picture Production. "A lot of significant things have occurred in my private life that I thought we could go over tonight and, um, evaluate," he said. "I was a philosophy major. I took all the abstract philosophy courses in college like Truth and Beauty and Advanced Truth and Beauty and Intermediate Truth and Introduction to God. Death 101. I was thrown out of N.Y.U. my freshman year. I cheated on my metaphysical final in college. I looked within the soul of the boy sitting next to me."

Allen, who now talks about the art of jokewriting in poetic terms—"You do it by ear, the same way that a poet needs a certain amount of syllables to make things happen right: the stammering, the repeating, the repetitions are all an instinctive attempt to get the right rhythm"—had discovered something in his low-key delivery. By a combination of brilliance and good luck (what he calls "a shooter's bounce"), Allen had hit on a persona, much in the way that Chaplin had found Charlie when he put on the bowler and picked up the cane. "Keaton and Chaplin reflected an era where the anxieties and underlying vocabulary of people's longings were physical. It was a physical era. It was trains and machines," says Allen, whose stance onstage was physically almost frozen. "I came along after Freud, when the playing field had shifted to the psyche. It was interior. What was interesting to people suddenly was the psyche. They wanted to know what was going on in the mind." At the beginning of the century, Chaplin's kinetic tramp made a legend of dynamism; by its end, Allen's paralyzed Woody made a legend of defeat. "How can I find meaning in a finite universe, given my shirt and waist size?" he asked. Allen's jokes raised the promise of meaning, then flunked the task. A climate of retreat had asserted its hegemony over hope. The shrug had replaced the pratfall.

Allen kept up his burlesque nihilism in *The New Yorker* between 1966 and 1980 with twenty-eight casuals, which were collected into "Getting Even," "Without Feathers," and "Side Effects." One of his pieces, "The Kugelmass Episode," won the O. Henry Award for best short story in 1978. In these jeux d'esprit Allen indulged his philosophical frivolity ("Eternal nothingness is O.K. if you're dressed for it") and sent up a variety of literary genres, like diaries, in "Selections from the Allen Notebooks" ("Should I marry W? Not if she won't tell me the other letters in her name"), and pulp detective fiction, in "The Whore of Mensa":

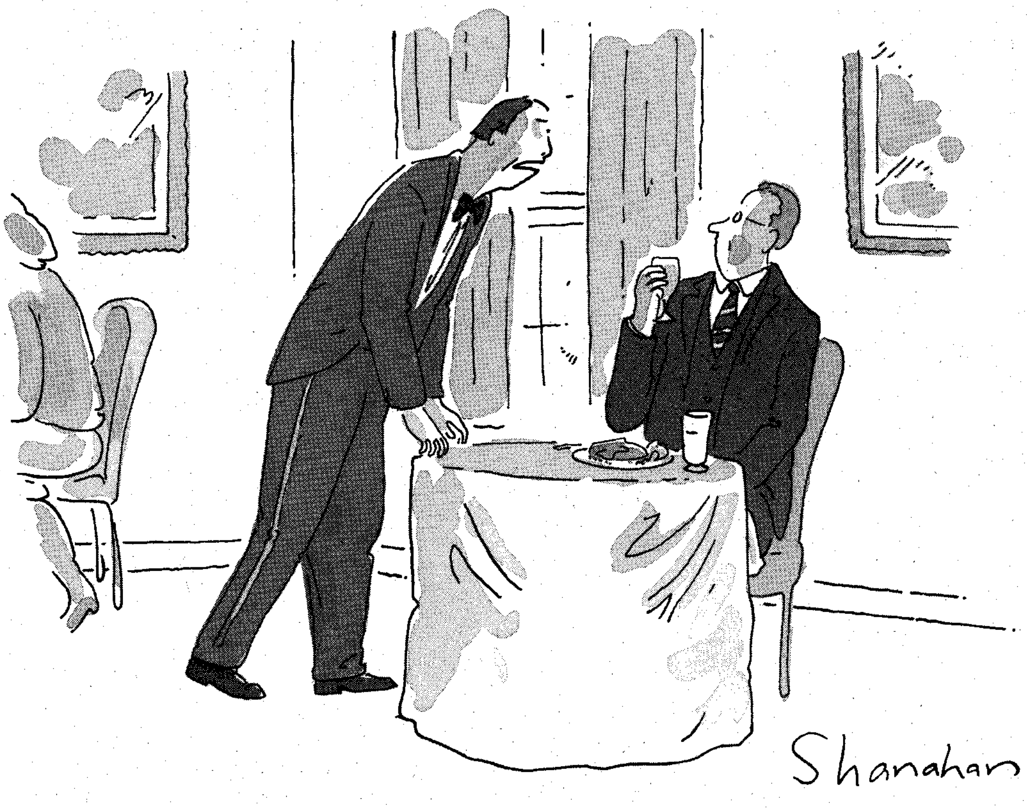
> "I'm surprised you weren't stopped, walking into the hotel dressed like that," I said. "The house dick can usually spot an intellectual."
>
> "A five-spot cools him."
>
> "Shall we begin?" I said, motioning her to the couch.
>
> She lit a cigarette and got right to it. "I think we could start by approaching *Billy Budd* as Melville's justification of the ways of God to man, *n'est-ce pas?*"
>
> "Interestingly, though, not in a Miltonian sense." I was bluffing. I wanted to see if she'd go for it.
>
> "No. *Paradise Lost* lacked the substructure of pessimism." She did.

"When the contact is intimate between the mind and the emotions of the reader, you can just drop snowflakes," Allen says of the difference between jokes for the page and jokes for the stage. "The most gossamer things work. But when you're out there facing five hundred people, you've got to have a good joke line." Eventually, Allen stopped writing what he calls "little soufflés." "I did not want to look up after years and just have a number of collections of those kinds of things, like S. J. Perelman and Robert Benchley," he says. "If I was going to take the effort to write prose, then I should write a book, because I felt that a book would be more substantial and more worthwhile and more challenging."

In moviemaking, Allen has been writing books, but on film. He has found his bliss, and he has a very specific definition of the term. "Bliss comes from the success of denial," he says. "Moviemaking is an immense distraction, which is a godsend. If you weren't killing that time and you weren't distracted, you'd be sitting home confronting issues that you can't get second-act-curtain lines for." Allen exerts an almost occult control over his work. "I have control of everything, and I mean everything," Allen told me one afternoon in the crepuscular gloom of his screening room. "I can make any film I want to make. Any subject—comic, serious. I can cast who I want to cast. I can reshoot anything I want to as long as I stay in the budget. I control the ads, the trailers, the music."

This is another way in which Allen is like Chaplin: in the history of the American film industry he is the only comedian besides Chaplin to be allowed to control his product and to work as an artist. Chaplin owned an entire studio and employed a huge workforce that "stood in line, at attention" when he entered the studio gates, as a publicist for his operation once wrote. Allen, who doesn't have a real studio, and refuses such ceremony, has nonetheless engineered a way to be always in production. His dream deal evolved out of an early relationship with David Picker, the late Arthur Krim, and Eric Pleskow, the enlightened panjandrums of United Artists, whom Allen says he "was blessed by," and who had a hands-off policy during the making of movies like "Bananas," "Sleeper," and "Love and Death."

"It was a bit of an uphill fight," Pleskow says. "But overseas he became very important. Italy was the first foreign country where Woody became a big hit. Then it spread to France, and the Germans took him to heart as well. We developed a kind of rhythm. We could count on a film almost every year from him." When agents and industry executives questioned the wisdom of setting such a contractual precedent with Allen or tried to get a similar deal for their clients, Pleskow would tell them, "Look, if you bring me another Woody, who writes, directs, and acts, then we're talking about the same playing field." He goes on, "Woody was also able to get enormous casts for reasonable costs, because people want to work with him." In 1978, Krim and Pleskow left United Artists to form Orion Pictures, and Allen, after satisfying his U.A. obligations with "Manhattan" and "Stardust Memories," followed them there. Their laissez-faire policy continued from "A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy" (1982) until they left Orion, in 1991. But Allen's carte-blanche arrangement still stands. His last three movies have been for Sweetland Films, a company of foreign investors, who retain foreign rights for themselves and allow Allen's friend and executive producer Jean Doumanian to sell the domestic rights to a distributor. Miramax took on "Bullets Over Broadway" (which cost sixteen million to make and grossed twenty and a half million worldwide), "Mighty Aphrodite" (which cost twelve million to make and grossed about eleven and a half million), and now "Everyone Says I Love You." "Woody has sacrificed great sums for his creative freedom, and he couldn't be happier about it," Sam Cohn, Allen's agent, says. In the old days, before Sweetland, Allen took union-scale wages for his services as writer, director, and actor, and his aggregate salary, according to Cohn, was "less than three hundred thousand dollars." He then got fifteen per cent of a film's gross, from the first dollar. If the film did well, he did well. ("Hannah and Her Sisters," for instance, which cost nine million dollars to make, grossed



"Is everything intense, sir?"

fifty-nine million worldwide.) In Allen's current deal with Sweetland, he gets a cash fee "in the very low seven figures," and then participates in the profits after Sweetland has recouped its money.

What would happen if he didn't completely control his product? I asked him. "I'd be gone," he said.

Allen sees his extraordinary artistic freedom as a mixed blessing. "You have no one to blame but yourself when you fail or when you do bad work," he explains. "I've often said, 'The only thing standing between me and greatness is me.' " Although Allen never revisits his films once he's finished them, he has a clear sense of their merits and limitations. "I would love to do a great film. I don't feel I've ever done a great film," he says, listing "The Bicycle Thief," "Rashomon," "Citizen Kane," and "Grand Illusion" as his standards of excellence. He adds, "I'm still in pursuit, and that pursuit keeps me going. If it happens, it'll happen by accident, because you can't pursue it head on." Indeed, the charm of work is its promise of forgetfulness, not of immortality. Allen's Herculean regimen—he sleeps seven hours a night, devotes one hour to the clarinet ("To maintain the low level that I play at, you have to practice every day"), and spends most of the remaining day at work—is awe-inspiring to those who know what an endurance test making a movie is. "I am both deeply depressed and exhilarated by what he does," Sydney Pollack says. "It gives me a *terrible* headache. If I'm *lucky*, in my wildest dreams I can make a picture every three years. I don't know how he does it." Of his prodigious output, Allen says, "It keeps you from the fear here and now." To a man like Allen, who is "hyperaware" of his finiteness, the medium of film offers certain exquisite properties. Movies not only stop time and kill time—they preserve time.

Comedies take Allen about a month to write, dramas about three months. Allen, who was practically writing before he could read, takes no pride in his facility. But he is unique among contemporary American filmmakers in having developed an uncanny ability to write complex, full-bodied female roles, and the actresses cast in Allen's films have won a disproportionate number of Academy Awards—Diane Keaton, Mira Sorvino, Dianne Wiest twice—and nominations (Jennifer Tilly and Judy Davis). "I was interested in women at a young age," Allen says. "When I was in kindergarten, I was trying to date them. I mean date them. I would ask them if I could buy them a soda or something." He goes on, "I remember in P.S. 99 they called my mother to school—this was in the fifth grade—and said, 'He's always in trouble with girls. That's all he thinks of.' "

"He loves women. He's not frightened of women. Thank God," says Barbara Hershey, who turned in a powerful performance in "Hannah and Her Sisters." Diane Keaton remembers being "crazy about him" at their first meeting, when she saw him standing on the stage of the theatre where she was auditioning for "Play It Again, Sam." "He could always get the girls, you know," says Keaton, who got the part and, for a while, Allen himself. (They stayed together for about three years.) "Girls have always liked him and had crushes on him because he's so funny and talented."

"It's more of an affinity with women," Dianne Wiest says. "There's some kind of relish, some kind of cherishing. It's complicated, really." She goes on, "He comes alive when he talks about Diane Keaton or when he talks about Soon-Yi. His whole affect changes. I've seen it with Keaton, especially. The way he listens to her. The way he makes fun of her. The way he has pride in her." (The teasing continues to this day. Recently, Allen called Keaton to leave a message on her answering machine. "I saw you on a television interview," he said. "The collagen is working.")

By his own admission, Allen has "gone to school" on the women in his life, and the particular intensity with which he takes them in—his habit of listening to and apprehending them—perhaps accounts for the fierce loyalty of his women friends. (Allen does have male friends, too: among them are the actor Tony Roberts, and the writers Marshall Brickman and Douglas McGrath.) Allen includes Wiest and Farrow in his gratitude when he says that the women he knows "have made major contributions" to his work. He adds, "I've been able to make a contribution to them, but they are there to make me look like a hero." Wiest claims that "no one else that I've

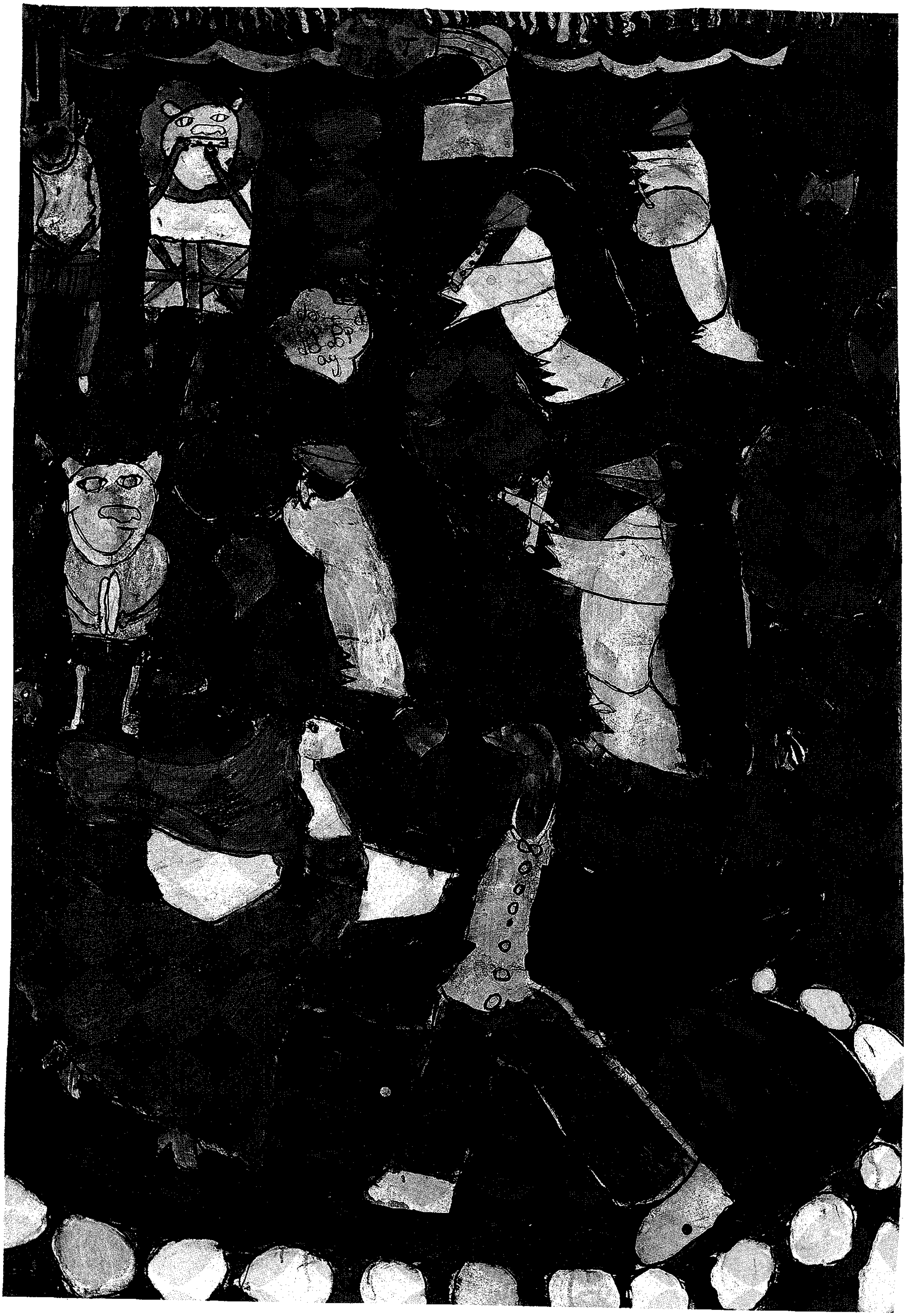
AT THE GALLERIES

STUDIO 108

KIDS' art flourishes on its own, jumping onto the poster-page and into our hearts almost at the same instant, and our responding smile and "Wow!" completes the process—event and critical response—in a single bound. Well, almost. An essential catalyst to this process in our town is the Studio in a School program, founded by Agnes Gund, an art collector and civic dynamo (she is now the president of the Museum of Modern Art), in direct response to the municipal budget cuts that eliminated virtually all arts teaching in elementary schools during the city's financial crisis in the seventies. This year, sixty-three professional artists and twenty-one thousand kids are participating in the program, and the results are on display in school corridors all over town and in the school-group lunchrooms of the American Museum of Natural History.

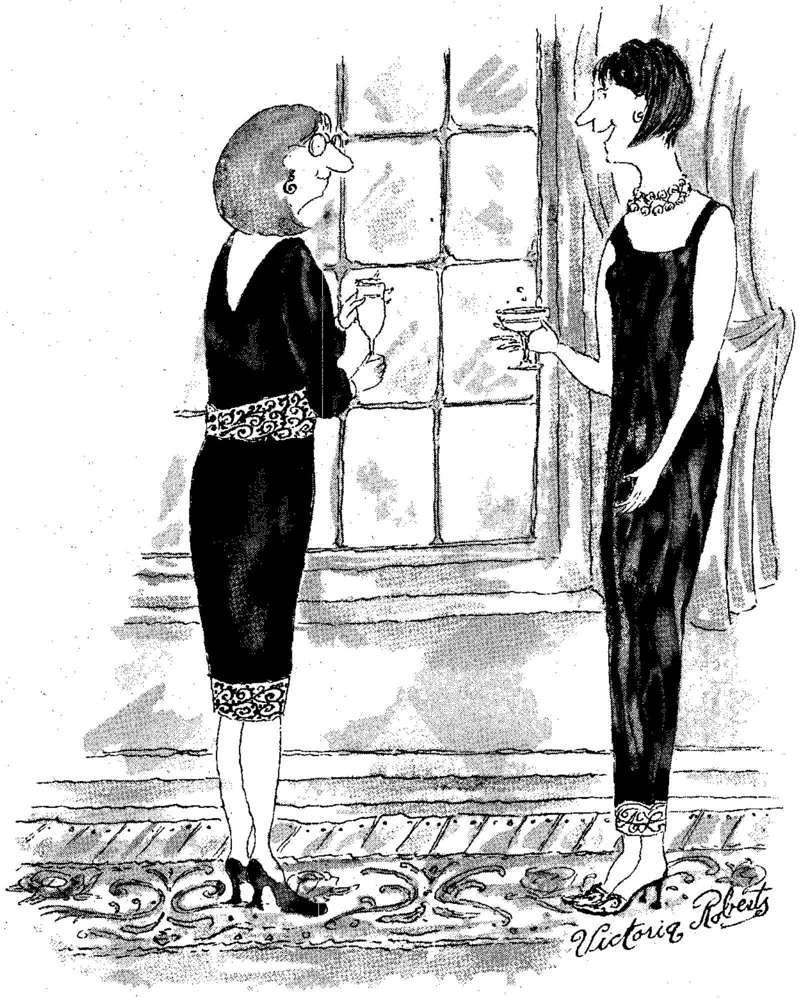
The gala musicale shown here is part of still another Studio in a School show, opening on December 10th, in the Paley Foundation building, at 1 East Fifty-third Street—a holiday lobbyful of sixty-odd landscapes and street scenes, portraits of people, portraits of animals, quilts, and banners. The picture is the joint work of Stephanie Ventura, Daniel Colon, and Monique Davis, fourth graders at P.S. 108, in Manhattan, whose artist-in-residence is Jimmy James Greene. It's five feet tall, and getting it done took the artists many lunch hours over two weeks. There may even be some traces of lunch mixed in with the acrylics and watercolors, but the waltzing swans can probably take that in stride. Are those penguins playing musical instruments, in tune with the disco Victrola up at the top? Is that a lion blowing on a harmonica and a monkey on drums? Don't be so literal. Kids' art can be anything and everything, including a chance to brighten up the artists' outlook and their hopes; more than four-fifths of the children are from low-income families. "We wanted to make a party," the P.S. 108 artists told Greene, and that's just what they did.

—DODIE KAZANJIAN



ever worked with has demanded of me things that I was absolutely certain that I could not do," and she explains the genesis of her prima-donna role in "Bullets Over Broadway": "I called him and asked him for a job, basically. He is a very loyal, loyal friend to me. He said, 'Of course I'll write something for you.' When I got the script, I called him up and said, 'Who the hell were you thinking about when you wrote this? Because it wasn't me.' " But Allen knew, before Wiest did, that she possessed the right qualities, and he found a way to get them out of her. Sometimes the situation has been reversed: for instance, Mia Farrow's hard-edged, wig-wearing blonde in "Broadway Danny Rose" was not a type that Allen would ever have thought Farrow capable of, until, after observing Mrs. Rao, of the Italian restaurant Rao's, in New York, she said to him, "I'd love to play that kind of a woman."

"When I started writing professionally, I could never, ever write from the woman's point of view," Allen says. "It was when I met Keaton that I started. She has such a strong personality and so many original convictions." Keaton showed Allen how to appreciate the beauty of industrial landscapes, of old people's faces and their eccentricity. "I became interested in her and interested in her sisters and her mother as people," Allen says. "I felt I had a lot to learn from her. So I started to try and write things that gave her an opportunity to get out and do her thing." He adds, "It became fun for me to write from the female point of view. I had never done it before, so it was fresh. It also didn't carry with it the burden of a central comic persona that had to see everything the way a wit sees everything." "Annie Hall," for instance, celebrated Diane Keaton and memorialized her high style and her and Allen's high times. "There's no human that makes me laugh like Keaton," Allen says. "She took me over to meet her grannies. Her 'grammies,' that's what they were. She would say, 'Friday night, it's Grammy Keaton, and then I have to see Grammy Hall on Tuesday night.' She had me over to her house for Thanksgiving. I was sitting around with these grammies. I almost died. After dinner, they bring out a deck of cards and everybody plays penny poker. I'm sitting there with this enormous table of goyim playing penny poker. And they're all looking at me suspiciously, like I have a scheme to take them in the card game. It was a scene I eventually put into 'Annie Hall.' "



"I'm off the leash, but I'm keeping my collar on."

In his gleanings from the personalities of his female friends, Allen is aware of a curious sleight of hand that takes place. "I'll write something that I think is a true character," he says. "When you see it—if I've hit it—you think that I know more about the woman than I really know. It's an intuitive thing, from knowing the actress and knowing the character that I want to write for her. When it works, you can extrapolate truths from it, because it's inadvertent. If you write something from the heart, it's full of truths that you never had to cerebrally impose on it. Someone can look at it and say, 'Gosh, how can you know so much about this subject?' Well, you don't."

CASTING is another area where Allen's method is "strictly instinctive." Over the years, his shrewd selection has proved to be the kiss of life to many a career. In "Everyone Says I Love You," for instance, Allen gives Goldie Hawn an opportunity to be better and more varied on-screen than she's probably ever been. "I've never played a mother of so many children," Hawn, who has four children, says. "I've never been able to bring that wisdom—that connection to older children—to the screen."

The actual process of auditioning and casting people, however, is embarrassing to Allen. "Very often it approaches enormous awkwardness," he says, explaining, "I feel for these poor people." Over the years, according to his casting director, Juliet Taylor, Allen "has gotten socially more relaxed"; nowadays, he actually sees and "reads" the actors. There was a long time when he preferred not to hear them read. But Allen still keeps these encounters "embarrassingly quick"—just long enough to get "that first rush of what they are."

"Part of me wants to help you with your crisis, Hargraves, but part of me wants to go to lunch."

The Woody Allen casting call is something of a legend in the business. It is held at his screening room, and Allen, who rarely sits during an audition, usually tries to head the actors off on the threshold of the screening room before they can take up a beachhead and sink into a chair. Even prior to meeting Allen, they are primed by Taylor with a litany of caveats: "You shouldn't be offended," "He does this with everyone," "This can be very brief." Just how brief Allen demonstrates by going into his spiel: "We're doing this around September. There are a number of uncast roles. Juliet Taylor thought you might be right for one of them. I just wanted to see you. Just to take a look at you physically so I don't have to do this from photographs. We'll let you know about this. Thank you." By the clock, with pauses and a few cordial nods of the head, it's maybe thirty seconds. When Taylor and Allen were considering English actors like Sir Ian McKellen or Sir John Neville for parts in "Mighty Aphrodite," Taylor had to take Allen aside. "You have to let him sit down," she told him. "He's a knight." She adds, "Somebody else would come in who wasn't a knight but was very prominent. Woody would say, 'But they're not a knight. Why do I have to let them?' " Goldie Hawn, for her first meeting, swept into the screening room and, because of her star status, was given the couch. "She was beautiful, she was full of energy, she was great, she lit up the room," Allen says. "After the first ten seconds, I didn't have to have any more of her, that was enough." But not enough for Goldie. "I was just eating the air in the room, because he was saying nothing," says Hawn, who launched into an extensive, buoyant account of her travels. Allen cut her off with a joke. "Could you leave the room, so I could talk?" he said.

Allen is always looking for what he calls "thrill capacity." "Any artist—you see it very clearly in jazz musicians—comes out there, and what differentiates the great ones from the lesser ones is that they can thrill you with the turn of a phrase, a run, or the bending of a note. This is true of acting." He goes on, "You never know what Diane Keaton's going to do or what Dianne Wiest is going to do or what Marlon Brando's going to do. The same with Judy Davis. If you do ten takes with her she'll do it ten different ways."

Allen preserves a kind of authorial detachment from the actors; he stands apart from them, watching, judging, mulling, and then, like a novelist scrapping and recasting a chapter, he has been known to dismiss an actor and reshoot the scene. "He doesn't want to stand there and beg a performance out of you," Pollack says. "So he watches, and if it isn't working you're fired." (There have been a couple of dozen casualties over the years.) Allen also doesn't talk much to the actors. This can be disconcerting and demoralizing for the ensemble. Barbara Hershey, whose "favorite thing is to put my head together with the director and create the character," got no joy from Allen in "Hannah and Her Sisters." "I never wanted to tell her anything," Allen says of his laissez-faire approach. "I would tell her not to think about it. 'Just get out there. Do what you feel in the moment. Fight for your survival. If you're doing something wrong, I'll tell you about it.' " The method saves Allen a lot of time and boredom. "That would be tedious to me," he says. "To have actors come over, sit down, and to go over all that nonsense with them. You accept the part. When you read the script, I assume you have enough brains and common sense to know what you're getting into."

Many actors find the experience cold, but it is also freeing and—in Allen's hands, anyway—effective. Hawn likens Allen's directing style to good parenting. "We have a tendency with our own children to impose what we believe their life should be," she says. "We put in front of them all the do's and don'ts, shoulds and shouldn'ts. So we corral the spirit. Woody gives you the space to experiment with your creativity, to feel abandonment. Therefore, you start to discover what else you can do."

"Woody throws you into the Mix-master and turns on the switch," Alan Alda, a veteran of three Allen films, says. "One of the things that happen is that the actors are so without their usual props—without the usual acting tricks that they can rely on—that they reach out to each other on-screen in an extraordinary way. You see wonderful relating in his movies. People really look like they're talking to each other. The other reason they look like they're talking to each other is that they really are listening, because they don't know what the other one's gonna say. They know the gist of it, but he seems to deliberately write it in a formal, uncolloquial way and asks you to make it colloquial. Most of the time he'll say, 'That sounds too much like a joke. Mess it up a little bit so it doesn't sound so much like a joke.' "

In "Everyone Says I Love You," there is a scene where Alda and his family argue over breakfast about family matters, for which, Alda says, "he did more directing there than in the entire first movie that I did with him." Allen himself uses the scene to illustrate his "typical way of directing." "It would be one master shot—everybody'd be in it," he says. "I'd get the actors together and tell them, 'These are the points that I need to make. I want to know that you're going to Le Cirque tonight, that the mother feels that she's championing the ex-con, and that the right-wing son is against her. I want that to come out.' " Allen goes on, "I just want the whole family to have breakfast and talk among themselves. So I say, 'Step on each other's lines. If you have a line that you want to be heard, fight to get it out. If you have exposition that's important, get it in somehow.' "

Allen is not easy on his actors, or on himself. "He's a sweet man, but he is not sweet when he's working," Wiest says. "Working with Woody is sweating blood, because he hears if you don't hit the notes. He's got great musicality. It's about hitting the notes. It's precision within the feeling. You've got to put the bead on the string, but before you even get to the string with Woody the bead has to be precisely round. It has to be great." Wiest, who in "Bullets Over Broadway" was made to descend a staircase about thirty times, knows Allen's look of displeasure—what she calls "a mild and gentlemanly disgust." She explains, "His head is tilted to one side. The left side of his mouth is up, the right side is down. His eyes are downcast. It's a thoughtful pose. But I know what's coming. I know it's not good for me." After the first day of shooting, Allen phoned Wiest. "You know, it's terrible. It's terrible!" Allen told her. "I told you so!" Wiest remembers telling him. "I think you should get somebody else." He said, "No, I think it's something to do with your voice. We'll reshoot it." Wiest, who has a high-pitched speaking voice, lowered it, and after the scene was reshot Allen said, "That's it." Wiest says, "That *was* it. That was the character. I'd be in the middle of a take and he'd go, 'Voice! Voice!' "

I AM TOO CLOSE FOR HIM TO DREAM ABOUT ME

I am too close for him to dream about me.
I'm not flying over him, not fleeing him
under the roots of a tree. I am too close.
Not with my voice sings the fish in the net.
Not from my finger rolls the ring.
I am too close. A large house is on fire
without my calling for help. Too close
for a bell dangling from my hair to chime.
Too close for me to enter as a guest
before whom the walls part.
Never again will I die so readily,
so far beyond the flesh, so inadvertently
as once in his dream. I am too close,
too close—I hear the hiss
and see the glittering husk of that word
as I lie immobilized in his embrace. He sleeps,
more available at this moment
to the ticket lady of a wandering circus with one lion
seen but once in his life
than to me lying beside him.
Now for her in him grows a valley, ochre-leaved,
closed off by a snowy mountain
in the azure air. I am too close
to fall out of the sky for him. My scream
might only awaken him. Poor me,
limited to my own form,
but I was a birch tree, I was a lizard,
I emerged from satins and sundials,
my skins shimmering in different colors. But I possessed
the grace to disappear from astonished eyes,
and this is the rich man's riches. I am too close,
too close for him to dream about me.
I pull my arm out from under his sleeping head.
It's numb, full of imaginary pins and needles.
And on the head of each, ready to be counted,
dance the fallen angels.

—Wislawa Szymborska

(*Translated, from the Polish, by Joanna Trzeciak.*)

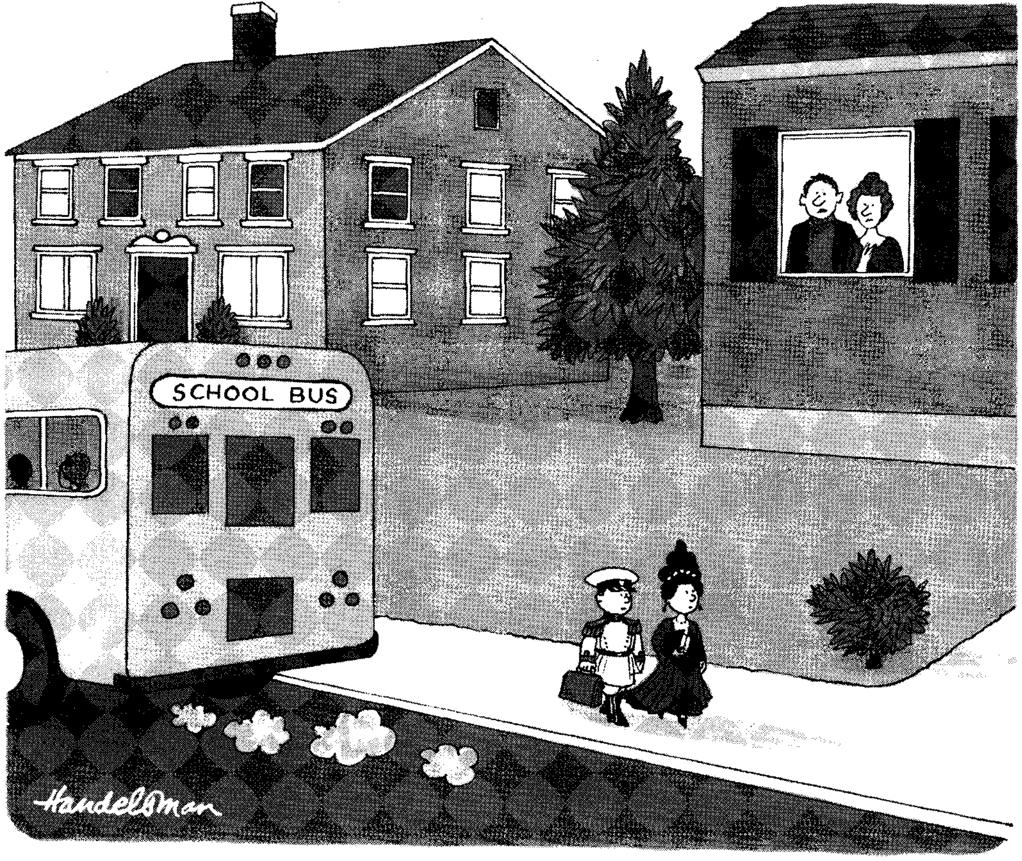
"It's just not good," he told Diane Keaton in the first week of shooting "Manhattan Murder Mystery." She explains, "He just will think of another way if it doesn't work. But if you're not cutting the mark, you're gone. It's not about friendship. It's not about anything. It's about the work." Allen does not regard his judgments as ruthless; in fact, he sees his lack of ruthlessness as a weakness. "I'm the opposite of a perfectionist. I'm an imperfectionist," he says. "I'm uncompromising with what I want to do with my work, but I'm not ruthless. I wish I were more ruthless. I feel that my work would be better if I could bring myself to express feelings of impatience or anger that I have but don't like to burden other people with." He goes on, "A more mature person would not go through that kind of mental anxiety. He would say, 'I'm sorry, we agreed that the costumes would all have red feathers on them and I'm not shooting unless they have red.' But I'll say, 'Well, all right, we'll do it this way.' "

Not always. On "September," Sam Shepard was granted permission to improvise a speech, and, according to Wiest, ended up talking about leaving Montana to go East to medical school. As Wiest and Allen were walking back to the dressing room, Allen turned to her. "Montana? Montana?" he said. "The word 'Montana' is gonna be in *my* movie?" It wasn't.

As a director, Allen gets what he wants, but when he gets in front of the camera he also—to some degree—must give the public what *it* wants. In "Everyone Says I Love You," Allen plays a typical Allen schlepper—a lovelorn American novelist living in Paris, called Joe Berlin. Joe's girlfriend has run off with his best friend, and he's suicidal. "I'm gonna kill myself," he says on a New York visit to his ex-wife, Steffi (Hawn), and her second husband (Alda). "I should go to Paris and jump off the Eiffel Tower. I'll be dead. You know, in fact, if I get the Concorde, I could be dead three hours earlier, which would be perfect. Or w-wait a minute. It— with the time change, I could be alive for six hours in New York but dead three hours in Paris. I could get things done, and I could also be dead." But on a trip to Venice with his daughter, D.J., he finds and wins the object of his desire—the married but unhappy Von (Julia Roberts). By the lucky coincidence of Allen's story, D.J. has eavesdropped after school on sessions conducted by her best friend's analyst mother, and Von is one of the regular patients; thus D.J. knows Von's intellectual passions (Titian), her problems (search for perfection), and how to manipulate her erogenous zones (blow gently between her shoulder blades). Joe, given all this advance intelligence, can't miss, and he doesn't. His uncanny powers are a deception, but Von sees him as a fantasy come true. "You know it's not that he's tall or handsome," Von tells her shrink. "But he's, um, magical."

Allen's art mediates between the need for illusion and the need to reach some accommodation with the real: Von leaves Joe—not because his magical-seeming con has been uncovered but because it has done its work too well. Her fantasy of perfection has been fulfilled; she is no longer tortured by the ideal and can accept the real. She decides to return to her marriage. Joe says, "Well, s-, but s-supposing I said to you that—that none of this was really true, that this is all a façade that I've been putting on. And I've been . . . playing this character just to . . . just to win you over, to get you to like me, make you happy?" Von counters, "I'd say you were crazy." Von can't accept the truth; Joe can't ever quite admit it. The moment demonstrates Allen's dilemma, which is that his strength is also his limitation: he's the spellbinder trapped by the success of his magic into a performance of someone he is not.

"The only hope any of us have is magic," Allen says. "If there turns out to be no magic—and this is simply it, it's simply physics—it's very sad." At the finale of "Everyone Says I Love You," he finds a way of expressing this longing for magical escape whose search dominates his films and his life. Joe, now abandoned by Von, takes his former wife, Steffi, away from a Paris Christmas costume ball and down to a spot by the Seine where, decades before, their romance began. Hawn and Allen are in evening dress, reminiscing. It's romantic stuff, but with regret just below the surface. As "I'm Thru with Love" strikes up, they start to dance—a Gene Kelly moment in a Woody Allen body. "What is more ridiculous than a man singing or dancing, in a certain sense?" Allen asks. "It's the aspi-



"I'm having second thoughts about those damn school uniforms."

ration of your most intense feelings, musicalized. If you took the music away, it would look so silly. It's so vulnerable and so open." But the music is there, and so is the magic—in the form of special effects. As if levitating, Hawn glides weightless beside Allen, vaults over him, is lofted by one foot high into the air above him. Allen shows the audience the trick and at the same time plays it on them. Here, Allen, the overreacher, finds a way of expressing "that almost something"—a Romantic imminence of perfection, harmony, and transcendent grace. After the dance, they kiss; but, as Allen says, "the truth of the matter is, it isn't magic. You kiss her, and she goes back to her husband, and they go home."

COMEDIANS are by nature enemies of boundaries. They live easier by the laws of joy which they create than by the laws of good behavior which society sets down. Their job description is to take liberties—something that the public applauds in art but abhors in life. Allen is not the only comic powerhouse to have come a cropper in this confusion of realms. Oscar Wilde was jailed, exiled, and ruined for flaunting sexual convention offstage as brazenly as his epigrams undermined social convention on it. Joe Orton was murdered in his bed for the sexual rapacity in private that made his comedies so successful in public. And Charlie Chaplin, throughout his career, consistently scandalized the American public, which called for his censure, his apology, even his deportation. Chaplin defied convention by wedding three teen-agers: he was twenty-nine when, in 1918, he married a seventeen-year-old actress; he was thirty-five when he married the already pregnant sixteen-year-old Lita Grey; and he was fifty-four when he walked down the aisle with the eighteen-year-old Oona O'Neill. He also fought—and lost on retrial, against all evidence to the contrary—a paternity suit brought by the twenty-five-year-old actress Joan Barry.

Near the end of "Everyone Says I Love You," at a costume ball where everyone is dressed as one of the Marx Brothers, the boy-crazy D.J. meets "a terrific guy—I mean, talk about sexy," and the camera angle widens to reveal that she, the daughter of Allen and his ex-wife in the movie, is dancing in the arms of a comedian, a Harpo Marx lookalike. The image echoes Allen's own transgression with Soon-Yi. In a sense, the public knows too much and too little about Allen's domestic turmoil. The very source of Allen's comedy—his ability to compartmentalize anxiety and to escape his sense of absence by turning it into fun—is what he came up against in the brouhaha: his detachment, so often the source of his comic glory, became his grief. Even now, when he talks about Mia Farrow, it's the legal, not the emotional, aspect of the transgression which he acknowledges. "People think I fell in love with my daughter. They couldn't tell the difference between my real daughter and Soon-Yi Previn," Allen says. "People think I was married to Mia. I was never married to Mia. I never lived with Mia for one moment in my life. Mia lived across the Park and I lived here." He adds, "Mia spread the word that Soon-Yi was underage, that I had raped her, and that she was retarded. Now, she's twenty-six years old. She is in graduate school at Columbia." (In an affidavit, Allen pointed out to the judge that "Soon-Yi was as old as Ms. Farrow when Ms. Farrow first married.") Farrow has disagreed with Allen's characterization of her remarks, but doesn't Allen's explanation dodge the issue of his parental role in the Farrow ménage in any case? "Until Dylan was born, I had no contact or interest in any remote way with the children, none whatsoever," he says. "I lived my life. They lived their life. Mia and I went out and worked together and that was fine. The only reason I believe that we stayed together was because we achieved a kind of separate stasis. It was comfortable and very distant, I mean, very distant, uh, you know, in every way." Allen, one presumes, was present at the conception of their son.

"Artists are just like everybody else when it comes to moral questions and questions of human behavior," he says. "They're not entitled to any more leeway." But Allen, who has always gone his own way in art, has done the same in life—at a cost to himself, and sometimes, as he must know, to others. "He has great balls," Diane Keaton says, of the artistic gutsiness that also translates into Allen's behavior. "He's got balls to the floor." "Deconstructing Harry" was originally called "The Worst Man in the World"; in it Allen brazenly addresses what he

SHOWCASE

ALL-AMERICAN

MARIA TALLCHIEF and American ballet came of age in the same moment. In 1946, at the age of twenty-one, she married George Balanchine. When Ballet Society, his subscribers-only company, became New York City Ballet and needed to attract the general public, she was its brilliant prima ballerina. She starred in the new ballets by Balanchine and Jerome Robbins that secured the company's local fame; she led the long European tours that sealed its international reputation.

Tallchief, who will receive the Kennedy Center Honors this week, has a golden niche all her own in the pantheon of American ballet: she didn't just rise to the occasion—she was the occasion. Balanchine had been struggling in this country since the early thirties to prove that classical ballet was an American birthright. What dancer could make a better case for him than Tallchief, the daughter of a full-blooded Osage Indian from Oklahoma, where the wind comes sweepin' down the plain? Tallchief easily met the glamour standard then being set by Hollywood beauties, and her Native Americanism was a publicity agent's dream. On the stage at City Center, she radiated a gardenia freshness along with strength, dedication, and good will; she was a people's princess in a people's theatre. (And, yes, she had a sister—Marjorie Tallchief, who became a star of ballet in Europe.) The Tallchief phenomenon shocked Americans and dazzled foreigners. And it inspired a wholesale renovation of the traditional ballerina repertory.

As Tallchief relates in an autobiography to be published next year, her union with Balanchine, twenty years her senior, was more a partnership than a marriage. Their children were "Orpheus," "Firebird," "Swan Lake," "Scotch Symphony," "The Nutcracker," "Allegro Brillante." After their breakup, her triumphs did not cease. But Tallchief's story will always be the story of ballet conquering America. It was and is an American romance. —ARLENE CROCE

Maria Tallchief in London, 1952.

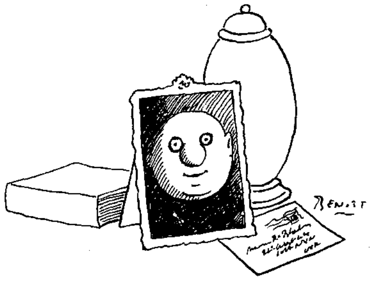
UPI/CORBIS-BETTMANN

perceives as the public's view of him. "I'm going right into the teeth of it," he says. "It's about a nasty, shallow, superficial, sexually obsessed guy. I'm sure everybody will *think*—I know this going in—they'll think it's me." When the furor first broke in the press, and Allen was accused by Farrow of abusing Dylan, his own view, he says, was "everybody's nuts. If it wasn't for a deeper pain in terms of children I thought that it was almost comical." He goes on, "The thing just kept snowballing and snowballing. People kept saying, 'This guy's career is finished.' I thought, You must be joking. My career can never be finished, because I will always write. Nobody can stop me. The stupidity of these allegations will fall by the wayside—if not in a week, in five weeks or ten, and of course eventually they did." After a fourteen-month investigation, which included a lie-detector test and a series of interviews at the Yale–New Haven Child Sexual Abuse Clinic, the Connecticut authorities terminated their investigation without filing charges against Allen. But he has still been tarred by the brush of child abuse.

"On many, many occasions, many occasions, over the phone and in person, Mia had said to me, 'You took my daughter, and I'm going to take yours,' " Allen told "60 Minutes" in 1992. (History is fable agreed upon, and, again, the two sides don't agree: Farrow denies ever having said this.) When the elevator door to Allen's penthouse opens, the first thing that meets the eye is pictures of the children, on the hallway wall, and when Allen walks into his writing room, he goes through Satchel's bedroom, past what looks like a life-size Tyrannosaurus rex standing guard over the bed. But the legal system has determined that it is not in Dylan's best interests to see her father, and Allen, whose supervised visits with Satchel are currently suspended by mutual agreement, has asked the court for more extensive visitation rights and is awaiting a decision. (Moses has chosen not to see Allen.) In the meantime, Mia has changed the children's names. Dylan is now called Eliza; Satchel was briefly Harmon and is now Seamus. "The children's best interests have not been served well at all," Allen says. "Murderers, dope addicts, people in prison—convicted people—are allowed to see their children. I wasn't even charged with anything, and I'm not allowed to see them." He adds, "I got a bad judge." Allen is thinking of turning the issue into a film. "We keep going to court, and every appeal is long and costly. I don't see the kid, and the kid doesn't see me. There's nothing I can really do about it legally, but I am going to do something about it publicly. I have a wonderful idea for a kind of documentary that's funny and sad and original. I will probably call it 'An Error in Judgment,' because they kept trying to pressure me into saying I made an error in judgment. I think there has been an error in judgment here, but it's been made by the judge."

Allen has no such qualms about his own decision. "I feel it's been one of the best relationships, if not the best, of my life," he says of Soon-Yi, who is thirty-five years Allen's junior, and whose presence is a reminder of life's bounty. "This was a poor girl who was an orphan in Korea, starving to death, eating a bar of soap for food and then throwing it up," Allen says (though he doesn't specifically credit Mia, who adopted Soon-Yi, with liberating her from all this). In his standup act, Allen used to joke that he was "breast-fed on falsies," and proper nourishment—emotional and otherwise—was an issue in his own childhood. "I always ate alone—lunch, breakfast, all meals. I never ate with my family," he says. "There were no books. There was no piano. I was never taken to a Broadway show or a museum in my entire childhood. Never." To this day, Allen needs constant stimulation. "When I go for a walk, I get a topic to think about, I never just go out casually," he says. "If I get into an elevator and I'm gonna go up more than three flights, or something, I'll buy a newspaper. I can't stand the unstimulatedness, because the anxiety sets in very quickly." Allen, who couldn't trust his family to meet his needs, fed himself. As he says in one of his evergreen lines, "I was the best I ever had."

This great joke admits Allen's loneliness in the kingdom of self, a loneliness that can be placated only by attainment—by the power to somehow redeem life and to see in the eyes of others the glow of the ideal. "Years ago," Allen told me, "I wanted to write this story where I would play a broken-down little magician in a cheap apartment or something. The girl downstairs would enter her apartment, and in some way she was going for some kind of psychological therapy. I would overhear her. I would follow her, then contrive to meet her and contrive to make her life what she wanted it to be."



Soon-Yi, it seems, has allowed Allen to live out this fantasy of omnipotence. "She gets a big kick out of all that I can provide for her, loves it. I love doing it for her," he says. "It's a wonderful relationship, because here's someone that I can really make happy and do things for and who appreciates it. There's just no hostility." In the eyes of the tabloids he is some kind of wolf in sheep's clothing, but to Allen "there's a genuine love between us." He says, "We underwent a crucible of intense terror tactics when this thing happened. The two of us were in the house. We'd be laughing that it seemed like the entire world was against us. Downstairs, we couldn't go out of the house because there were television trucks and paparazzi all over. The two of us would go up on the roof to get our fresh air for the day. We were housebound sometimes for a week. You know, it was quite romantic. She came through with flying colors for me. She stood by me in every way. She just wanted me to know that, whatever happened, she loved me." Soon-Yi now runs the house she has helped to redesign, and she and Allen have lived together for almost four years. In the den at the far-north end of their apartment, which overlooks the entire leafy expanse of Central Park, Allen has placed a gigantic refectory table, where Soon-Yi does her work: books, a computer, and papers are laid out as if at a banquet. It's life's banquet, which Allen himself, in his drivenness, can only peck at. His delight in providing for Soon-Yi is not unlike his description of doing a magic trick: "being able to do something that isn't of this routine, humdrum, cruel world." His reward is as simple as it is profound: to see his best self reflected in the accepting eyes of another. A similar chemistry is played out in his moviemaking. "There is that constant aspiration toward the magical moment," Allen says, "but in the end . . ." He stops and looks away. The sentence goes unfinished. The gloom of his mortality settles over him.

"Why don't we make it simple this year, and just give everyone the finger?"

• •

No one gets out of life alive; but the final surprise about Allen is that, for all his legendary negativity, he seems to enjoy his life and has worked hard at enjoyment. He "still gets a thrill" at the sense of blessing when, in the lush part of New York he inhabits ("the zone," he calls it), "I see those families take their kids to those private schools and their chauffeurs pulling up, and see the guys in tuxedos and the women coming down, and the doormen getting them cabs." It's the "champagne" world Allen dreamed of inhabiting in ice-cooled Brooklyn movie houses on the empty summer afternoons of his youth.

One Monday a few weeks after our conversation, Allen and I met again for dinner before going on to his gig at Michael's Pub, which has moved to the high-ceilinged elegance of the Parker Meridien, on West Fifty-seventh Street. Allen usually plays only the first set, and there's most always a line outside the room, so he enters the building from the rear and comes up through the kitchen just in time to go on. That night, he was facing a full house of about a hundred fans who were paying the twenty-five-dollar cover charge to hear the band but mostly to stare at him.

Allen plays the antiquated Albert-system clarinet used by his jazz heroes, players like Bechet, George Lewis, Johnny Dodds, and Albert Burbank. He has a Buffet clarinet, which he assembles at his table, in the rear of the room, facing the bandstand. "I don't think New Orleans jazz means much to anybody, but to a small few us of it's great," he says, fitting a Rico No. 5 reed onto his mouthpiece. What ravishes Allen about the music is the "warmth and simplicity" of it. "The more primitive the better for me. The enjoyment is more direct," he says. "The feeling is completely uncomplicated by any kind of cerebration. It's as simple as can be. Sometimes it's three chords. The guys who play it, who can really do it, make it so beautiful that it's astonishing."

Allen takes the stage. Here, wedged between a beefy banjoist and a crew-cut trumpeter, he goes through the band's repertoire and into a straight shot of joy. He plays almost the whole set with his eyes closed and his crossed left leg pumping like a piston. He claims to have a love for the music but "no gift," which isn't exactly true. What he lacks in breath he makes up for in vibrato. As the band swings into its program, which tonight includes "You Always Hurt the One You Love," "Seems Like Old Times," and "We Shall Not Be Moved," Allen's delicate fingers and his body warm to the task. He wriggles on his chair, rolling his shoulders and his head as he teases his croaky sound out of the clarinet. It's as if he were shedding skin, shaking free of his body and his woe.

Sometimes, in the early hours of the morning, Allen practices upstairs in his bedroom, staring out into the night. His treat is to put on a Bunk Johnson record and play in with the band. "I play with all the great players without having to meet them," he says. "To me it's like real. It's transporting. It's like being bathed in honey." In music, in film—in fact, in everything he does—Allen has created a fantasy world so potent that some of his most far-fetched dreams have come true. After all, as he says, Willie Mays has flied out to him in a softball game at Dodger Stadium; he has played clarinet marching in New Orleans parades and at Preservation Hall; he has supped with Groucho and with S. J. Perelman. In his comic routines, Allen painted himself as the prince of pessimism: "I wish I had some kind of affirmative message to leave you with. I don't. Would you take two negative messages?" Yet he has certainly seized life with passion and with gratitude. "As you watch comedians with joy, or watch films with joy, it becomes metabolized and you pay it out," he says. "You're eating this food endlessly, endlessly. Then you look up and it's part of you." There is something poignant in Allen's avidity for delight. "If I were to close my eyes and imagine Woody," Diane Keaton says, "something I would keep with me is just the image of him watching 'Cries and Whispers.' Do you know what I'm saying? Him being swept away. I've seen it on his face. I've seen it. It's moved me. It makes me love him." ♦

A REPORTER AT LARGE

AMONG PLANETS

In the age of the Hubble Telescope and rocks from Mars, planetary exploration is getting new respect.

BY DAVA SOBEL

THE rock that sprang to Martian "life" late last summer did not shock me by offering up fossils of an extinct foreign biology. I had long believed—with Stephen Jay Gould, Frank Drake, and other scientists who have considered the odds—that the universe teems with life, and that our failure to find it owes more to our lack of exploration than to an absence of life elsewhere.

No, what amazed me about the potato-size rock that fell from Mars was that it had travelled millions of miles across space to land here, blasted from world to world by a planetary collision of the sort that purportedly killed off our dinosaurs, and had then lain for millennia upon an Antarctic ice field, until an observant young woman in an expedition party picked it up, because she figured that it had come from another world. *How could she know such a thing*? She recognized the meteorite's extraterrestrial nature right away, thanks to several acts of foraging far from the surface of this planet by teams of Apollo astronauts and robot explorers, which have enabled some of us to see pieces of the moon and of the planets for what they really are.

The composition of ALH 84001, as the much scrutinized rock is designated, closely matches the makeup of Martian matter that was analyzed on site in 1976 by miniature chemistry laboratories aboard two Viking Mars landers. As a result of this positive identification, no astronomer—not even the severest critics of NASA's biological interpretation of the rock's innards—seriously doubts the meteorite's Martian origin. And now other planetary scientists are busy determining—from everything they know, from every relevant spacecraft mission and telescope observation—just which crater (among tens of thousands scattered over the Red Planet) marks the ancestral home of this chunk of Mars crust. Researchers think they have pinpointed its former resting place to just two possible sites—a region called Sinus Sabaeus, fourteen degrees south of the Martian equator, or a crater east of the Hesperia Planitia region. The bold precision of this assessment is for me the most stunning surprise dealt by the rock from Mars—even more mind-boggling than the suggestive traces of something that might once have lived and died in its microscopic fissures.

I cannot resist comparing this new intimacy with our solar system to the shoebox diorama of the planets I designed for my grade-school science fair. I used marbles, jacks balls, and Ping-Pong balls, all hanging from strings and painted different colors. That crude assortment of materials allowed a reasonable representation of what was known forty years ago about the nine planets: Mars was red and had two moons; Jupiter dwarfed the other planets (I should have used a basketball, but it wouldn't fit in the box); Saturn had rings.

If my school-age daughter were to attempt such a construction today, she'd need handfuls of jelly beans and gum balls to model all the newly discovered satellites of the giant planets. She'd want rings around Jupiter, Uranus, and Neptune, too, not to mention a moon for Pluto. If she wanted, she could even leapfrog *this* solar system altogether and pick for her project one of the newly discovered planetary systems that populate more distant regions of the galaxy—planets that circle stars with names like 51 Pegasi, 70 Virginis, 47 Ursae Majoris, 55 rho^1 Cancri, Lelande 21185, and PSR 1257+12.

Our solar system, once considered unique, now stands as merely the first known example of a planetary system. Since October of 1995, astronomers at ground-based observatories in Europe and the United States have announced that they've found evidence of at least seven alien planets orbiting other stars. As yet, not one of these large planets—some of which are many times the mass of Jupiter—has actually been seen through a telescope; all were detected indirectly by the gravitational effects they exert on their parent stars. Yet, even though we have no picture of what they look like, enough information has been deduced about their atmospheric conditions to grant the nickname Goldilocks to a planet attending the star called 70 Virginis, suggesting that the cloud-top temperature is "just right," as the storybook Goldilocks would say, for the presence of liquid water. Since liquid water, which supports life, is not known to exist anywhere in our solar system except on Earth, hopeful scientists need only a short leap of faith to carry them from the presence of water to the existence of extraterrestrial life. (To raise the spectre of the Mars rock once again, the primitive life-forms that pressed their memory inside it recall an era when dry-as-dust Mars was a wet world, where rivers flowed.)

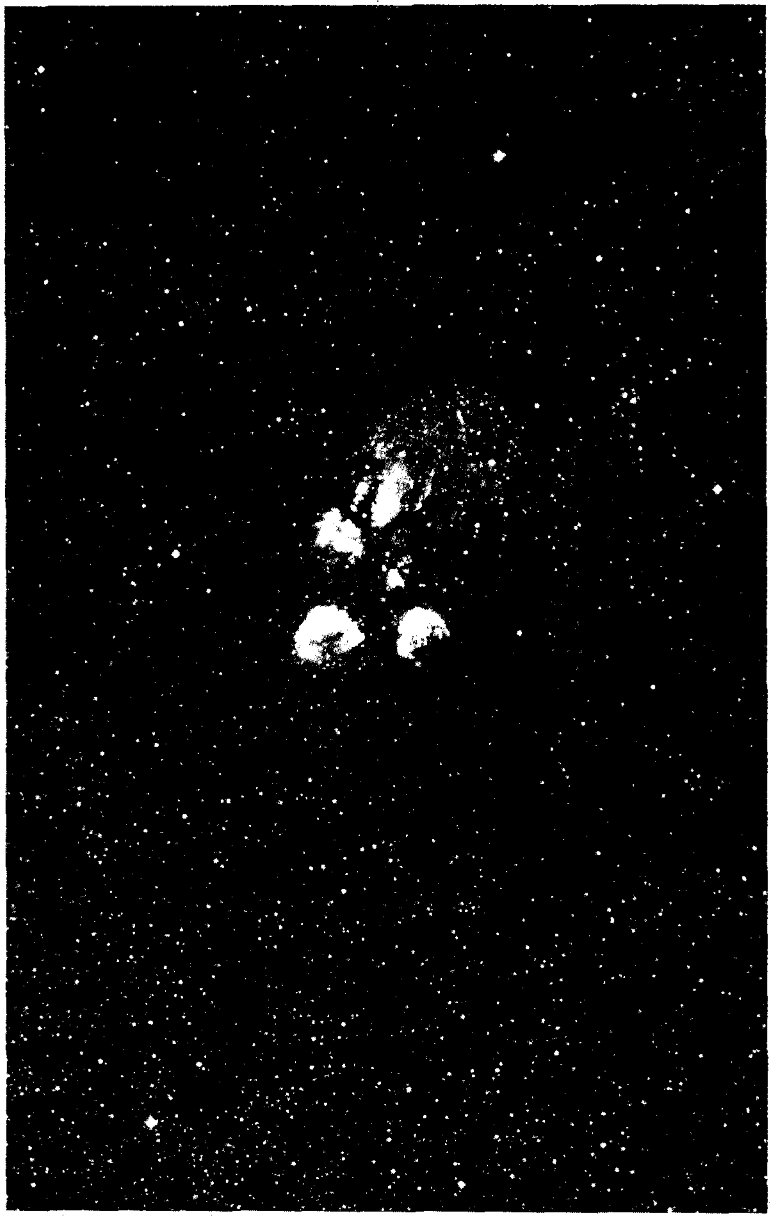
Thanks to the excitement surrounding these recent discoveries, researchers investigating the planets have found their status suddenly raised. For years, they were derided by stellar and galactic astronomers as "hard-rock guys" and "butterfly collectors," as though they were too shortsighted and fact-oriented to appreciate the grand theoretical arena of deep space. That is to say, compared with the Big Bang origin of everything, or with black holes that swallow anything, planets paled for many astronomers, and were dismissed as a pedestrian pursuit.

But now planets are in the ascendant both in scientific circles and in the popular view, for a variety of reasons, some esoteric and some aesthetic. One is the sheer proliferation of planetary systems, whose existence had long been suspected but was never proved. The number of planets in the universe, it turns out, may exceed the number of stars.

Just last January, at a meeting of the American Astronomical Society held in San Antonio, scientists using images from the Hubble Space Telescope reported that the universe contains at least forty billion more galaxies than had previously been believed. The celestial census thus rose in a trice from at least ten billion to at least fifty billion, with each manifold galaxy boasting from tens of billions to hundreds of billions of stars. And approximately one in ten of those suns, it is thought, has planets as yet unseen revolving in formation. Within our own Milky Way Galaxy alone, many astronomers now estimate, millions of stars are encircled by planets. Indeed, a retinue of planets seems to be a natural consequence of star formation. Given these literally astronomical statistics, the chances loom large that some percentage of the solar systems in question might harbor planets hospitable to life—even intelligent life. Earlier this year, Daniel S. Goldin, the NASA administrator, declared the search for extra-solar planets a priority for the space agency. (NASA abandoned its support of the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence in 1993, however, after one too many attacks by United States senators, who read U.F.O. reports from supermarket tabloids into the *Congressional Record.*)

I visited Goldin in Washington, last spring, to talk to him about planets near and far. The NASA chief, who is fifty-six years old and bears an uncanny resemblance to Dustin Hoffman, appeared to have the energy and enthusiasm of someone half his age. Although the day at headquarters had been designated a dress-down Friday, and many NASA employees were wearing jeans and sneakers, Goldin had on shiny black cowboy boots, a blue shirt, and a dark-olive suit. On a coffee table in his office sophisticated adult toys—models of rocket ships to come—represented the latest in aerodynamic elegance.

"My vision, my hope, my dream," Goldin told me, "is to take a picture of an Earth-like planet, within a hundred light-years of Earth, that will let you see oceans and continents and clouds, and maybe even mountain ranges. Just think what that picture would do."



Within our Milky Way Galaxy alone, many astronomers now estimate, millions of stars are encircled by planets as yet unseen.

THOMAS RUFF, COURTESY EDITION SCHELLMANN, MUNICH-N.Y.

At that moment, I thought I knew exactly the sort of excitement he was imagining. But now, in the aftermath of the Mars-rock discovery, I realize how grossly I underestimated the impact of such a discovery.

"Let's say we find an Earth-size planet by direct detection in ten years," Goldin continued. "It's not impossible. We'd better be prepared to explain what processes might have given rise to the observations we make then. We'll have to have done some ground-truthing"—NASA-speak for laying intellectual groundwork—"on Earth, and some ground-truthing on some other planets in our own solar system, so when we look out there and see things we'll understand them."

THIS solar system that Goldin now views as ground truth consists mainly of a star, nine planets, and more than sixty moons.

Although Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn have been known since antiquity, at least as wandering lights in the night sky, the detection of the more distant planets, Uranus and Neptune, had to await the development of large telescopes in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The smallest planet, Pluto, came to light only through heroic search measures applied in 1930 by Clyde Tombaugh at the Lowell Observatory, in Arizona. (Not long ago, I asked Tombaugh, who is now ninety years old, what he said on the sweet eve of his success. "That's it!" he remembered exclaiming.) To sight the planets of other stars will require a new breed of telescopes, which will in all likelihood be assembled and stationed in space.

The star that is our sun, along with its planets, condensed from a cloud of interstellar gas and dust that collapsed some four and a half billion years ago. As the cloud spun down, it spread out into a broad disk. The sun formed at the disk's dense heart. The planets accreted around the sun in a flat plane—the same flat plane in which they orbit to this day. In January of 1994, the Hubble Space Telescope captured its first compelling images of the process repeating itself elsewhere—in a region of the constellation Orion, where new stars are forming.

The individual worlds of our solar sys-

"How are the human rights on these?"

• •

tem differ drastically from one another, despite their common origin, and each planet is defined in part by its distance from the center: On the heat-soaked surface of Mercury, tides of solid rock have been raised by the nearby sun. Around Venus, an atmosphere run amok has smothered a nearly Earth-size world under a blanket of carbon dioxide and sulfuric acid at least fifty miles thick. Earth might better have been named Water, because its liquid presence—covering most of the surface—is what distinguishes the third planet from all the others. The nearness of Mars, along with its Earth-like features (two polar ice caps, for example, easily seen through a small telescope), has inspired fantasies of life-forms there. In 1877, when Giovanni Schiaparelli viewed Mars from Milan, he saw a maze of straight lines crazing the planet's surface. He described the markings as *canali*, meaning "grooves," or "channels," mapped them, and gave them names—Elysium, Eden, Paradise, Utopia, and the like—but he did not pretend to know what they were. Later, after sloppy translation into English turned the features into "canals," the American astronomer Percival Lowell surrendered Mars to an intelligent race of imaginary beings who fended off fatal drought with a planetwide irrigation network.

Across the asteroid belt from Mars, Jupiter is the quintessential gas giant: it has no solid surface to speak of. Saturn, squashed by a rapid rotation rate to the most oblate of all the planets—flattened at the poles and spread at the equator—has its squatness exaggerated by broad encircling rings. Green and icy Uranus lies sidewise, with its poles where its equator should be. Neptune has white cirrus clouds, fashioned from crystals of frozen methane, moving in changing weather patterns over an ice-slush "ocean" of methane, ammonia, and frigid water. Pluto, the coldest, smallest, and least known planet, raises many questions at the ninth circle of the solar system, having never been visited by any American or Russian mission of robot exploration. (Of the four spacecraft that are heading completely out of the solar system—Pioneers 10 and 11, Voyagers 1 and 2—not one has ventured close enough to Pluto to learn anything about it.) The instrument most actively pushing planetary exploration forward now, toward Pluto and elsewhere—at a time when funding for big planetary missions has dropped far below its former levels—is the Hubble Space Telescope.

ALTHOUGH the primary mission of the Hubble Space Telescope is to probe beyond our galaxy in order to determine the size, age, and fate of the universe—whether it will expand forever or eventually contract—roughly ten per cent of telescope time is spent on solar-system studies. This division of Hubble's labor reflects the demographics of American space science: of the more than sixty-three hundred members of the American Astronomical Society, at the most twelve hundred pursue lunar and planetary studies full time. The rest devote their research efforts to subjects like stellar astronomy, theoretical astrophysics, galactic dynamics, and cosmology. Even the name of the telescope stresses its obedience to majority rule, by honoring the memory of Edwin P. Hubble (1889-1953), the American astronomer who first grasped the immensity and the expansion of the universe. Edwin Hubble made his discoveries through a telescope perched on a California mountaintop. His namesake enjoys a much better vantage point—three hundred and seventy miles straight up, where it orbits the Earth every ninety minutes and its view of the cosmos is unobstructed by the distortion and jiggle of Earth's atmosphere. As a result, H.S.T., as it is often called, can literally see forever.

The Hubble's international retinue of about four hundred astronomers, computer scientists, and technicians runs around-the-clock operations from the Space Telescope Science Institute, a modern five-story building on the Baltimore campus of Johns Hopkins University. In the lobby of the institute, near the receptionist's desk, a small, wall-mounted television screen continually fills with serial images of planets, galaxies, supernova remnants, and comets—trophies of the telescope's reconnaissance.

Overhead in the atrium hangs a full-size replica of the telescope, wrapped in heat-reflecting aluminum foil, just like the real thing. It is a long, large tube, with a hinged cover at one end which can be flipped up and down, like one of those plastic visors people snap on their eyeglasses to make temporary sunglasses: for a few minutes during some orbits, the Hubble Space Telescope must "blink" to block the nearby Earth from its view.

Many yellow metal handles, stuck all over the outside of the telescope, give astronauts a handhold virtually anywhere along or around it. Seeing the handles reminded me that although this instrument was deployed from the cargo bay of a space shuttle to make its observations without the interference of human beings or the air they breathe, it is first and last a man-made tool, dependent on regular maintenance calls. When Keith Noll, a resident planetary scientist at the institute, came to fetch me from the lobby, I remarked on the abundance and the significance of the yellow handles. He pursed his lips and murmured, "Thank God for that."

Everyone at the institute remembers the months following Hubble's launch, in April of 1990, when the telescope was an orbiting embarrassment, depicted in newspaper cartoons as a mechanical Mr. Magoo in space. Then the perfectly executed repair mission, three and a half years later, redeemed the observatory as the most credible witness ever to astronomical events.

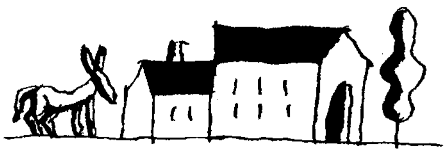
Noll, at thirty-eight, represents the second generation of planetary scientists—those whose childhoods were dominated by the Apollo moon landing, and who as young adults watched Carl Sagan's "Cosmos" on public television. Sagan, the best known and loved of the first-generation planetary explorers, availed himself of a series of direct exploration opportunities via spacecraft that had been dispatched to every planet from Mercury to Neptune. Noll, who had begun his science studies in physics, switched to planetary science after thirteen episodes of "Cosmos," because, he recalls, "the idea of studying places where you could actually go someday turned me on."

"Go" is necessarily a relative word in Noll's current vocabulary. The telescope is one giant step removed from missions that actually visit planets by proxy, the way the Galileo spacecraft is currently exploring the atmosphere and moons of Jupiter. (Recent revelations show closeups of the moon Callisto's cratered surface.) But if planetary scientists don't consider the Hubble a substitute for visitation, they are awfully glad to have it.

"I don't usually think of myself standing on the surface of Ganymede, scooping up a shovel of snow, and seeing all these little bubbles of oxygen in it," Noll says. "But in an abstract way that's what I'm doing, day in and day out." This last was said joyfully, as though Noll couldn't quite believe his good fortune at having found a job that permitted him to live out a childhood dream. Virtually every planetary scientist I've ever interviewed expressed the same sense of awestruck privilege, as though he were pursuing favorite hobbies on company time.

Noll's major research concerns the four largest moons of Jupiter, known as the Galilean satellites, because they were among the first objects Galileo discovered with his homemade telescope, in 1610. Noll relies on an instrument aboard the Hubble called the Faint Object Spectrograph, which allows him to look beyond the realm of visible light into the ultraviolet. Such observations are impossible to conduct from the ground, because Earth's ozone layer blocks out the extremely short wavelengths of ultraviolet radiation. Thanks to the Hubble, however, Noll and his colleagues have identified the presence of ozone around Ganymede, a planet-size Galilean moon. Noll believes that a tenuous oxygen atmosphere surrounds Ganymede. Virtually nothing else about Ganymede's atmosphere seems Earth-like, however, although the grooves and furrows that score its surface recall the linear "canals" of Mars.

"One of the hardest things about being a scientist," Noll says, "is selecting a problem that's small enough for you to actually attack and pursue as a project yet big enough to add something significant to what's already known. One way to fit into the bigger picture is to study systems or phenomena that reflect back to phenomena on Earth. Comparing planets that way can push you ahead or uncover the flaws in your logic. Another way to go, which is a little more interesting to me, is to try to work backward in time and figure out how the planets got the way they are. If you can work your way back to the beginning of the solar system, you're not too big a step away from what you see when you look at other stars that have disks around them, and, presumably, planets forming in the disks. That gives you the connection—the history of how we got from a big blob of gas to a star that has planets, with life on one of them."



While many astronomers routinely spend several days a month travelling, because they have to trek to and from mountaintop telescopes in remote regions of Hawaii, Chile, or Australia, Noll and the other observers using the Hubble don't need to leave their offices. Once the proposals they submit, outlining how and why they want to use the telescope, are approved, the telescope does the rest: it takes the required images or measurements and logs them, digit by digit, onto an onboard tape recorder. Usually within hours the scientific information arrives at the Space Telescope Science Institute, and there it is calibrated, cleaned of background noise, configured, converted into usable units for analysis, and computerized. The observing astronomer receives terse E-mail messages from the institute, the first one saying "We have scheduled your observations" and the last one, ideally, saying "We have taken your observations." A few days later, the data tapes arrive on his or her desk by mail or Federal Express.

The exception so far is a forty-five-year-old planetary scientist named Larry Esposito, who won permission to put the Hubble through its most dangerous mission to date. Last year, he travelled from the University of Colorado at Boulder, where he teaches astronomy, to Baltimore, in order to man the telescope during the crucial nine hours of his Venus observations.

"There were some tricky things that had to do with wiggling the telescope," Esposito explained to me. "Venus is so close to the sun that we faced a risk of damaging the telescope's optics and detectors."

Esposito had made plans to operate Hubble in a Dracula mode—catching quick glimpses of Venus during a five-minute span in each orbit when the telescope still lay hidden in the shadow of Earth but Venus was already visibly risen, and then slewing the delicate optics quickly out of harm's way before sunup. "I definitely didn't want to have to go around saying, 'It was my experiment that fried the space telescope,' " he said.

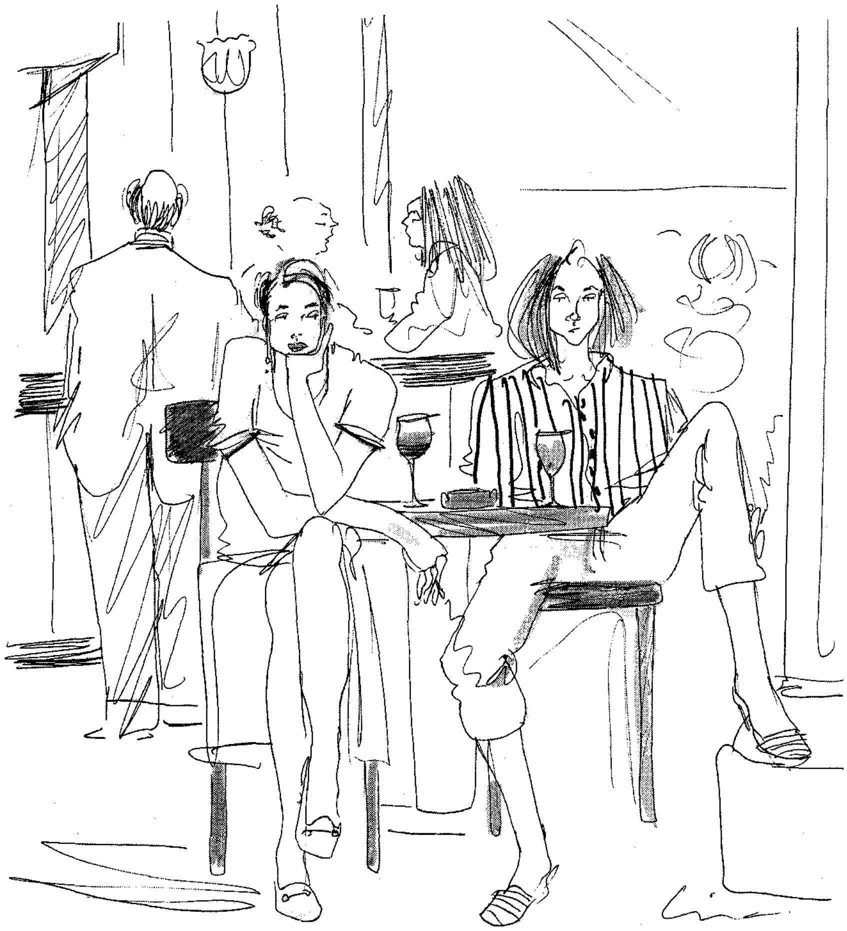
Esposito submitted his initial application in 1985—five years before the telescope was launched. Nearly a decade passed during which institute review panels first said they would allow Esposito's experiment and then they wouldn't. When the final O.K. came down, Esposito had only a month to get ready instead of the usual yearlong lead time. For a while, it seemed as if he would be followed by misfortune. On the night he arrived, he was told that the Hubble had experienced a malfunction and shut itself down. He flew back West, expecting to wait well over a year for another chance. But only two weeks later he found himself hurrying back to Baltimore with all systems go.

Esposito continues to analyze the pictures it took him so long to secure. Venus's permanent veiled condition heightens his triumph. For decades, the planet, despite being Earth's closest neighbor and near twin in size, had resisted most efforts at direct exploration. It simply devoured a dozen Russian Venera landers in the sixties; they were all melted or crushed within an hour by nine-hundred-degree heat and by pressures equal to those three thousand feet beneath the sea.

Esposito was promised another look at Venus through Hubble's eyes this past August, but preparations for the next big telescope refurbishment, coming up in March of 1997, have delayed those plans indefinitely.

"In the space business, you have to be very patient," Esposito said. For twelve years, he was able to make daily observations via the Pioneer Venus orbiter, but that ended in October of 1992, when the spacecraft burned up like a meteor falling through Venus's atmosphere. "Hubble is more important now than it used to be," he concluded, with an almost grim determination, "because the missions we sent to Venus have all ended."

FOLLOWING the discovery of one small rock from Mars, a new enthusiasm for visits to planets is building. Scientists and government officials speak of a "return to Mars" as though the twenty-year gap in space missions to that planet were just an oversight, instead of the end of an era. Planetary missions such as Pioneer Venus and its successor Magellan (which spent the early nineties piercing the Venusian clouds with radar to construct detailed maps, and even a globe, of the planet's surface) fit the mold of Big Science. They had followed in the footsteps of the Apollo manned lunar missions, the two Vikings that landed on Mars twenty years ago, and the Voyagers that flew through the environs of the outer planets between 1977 and 1989.



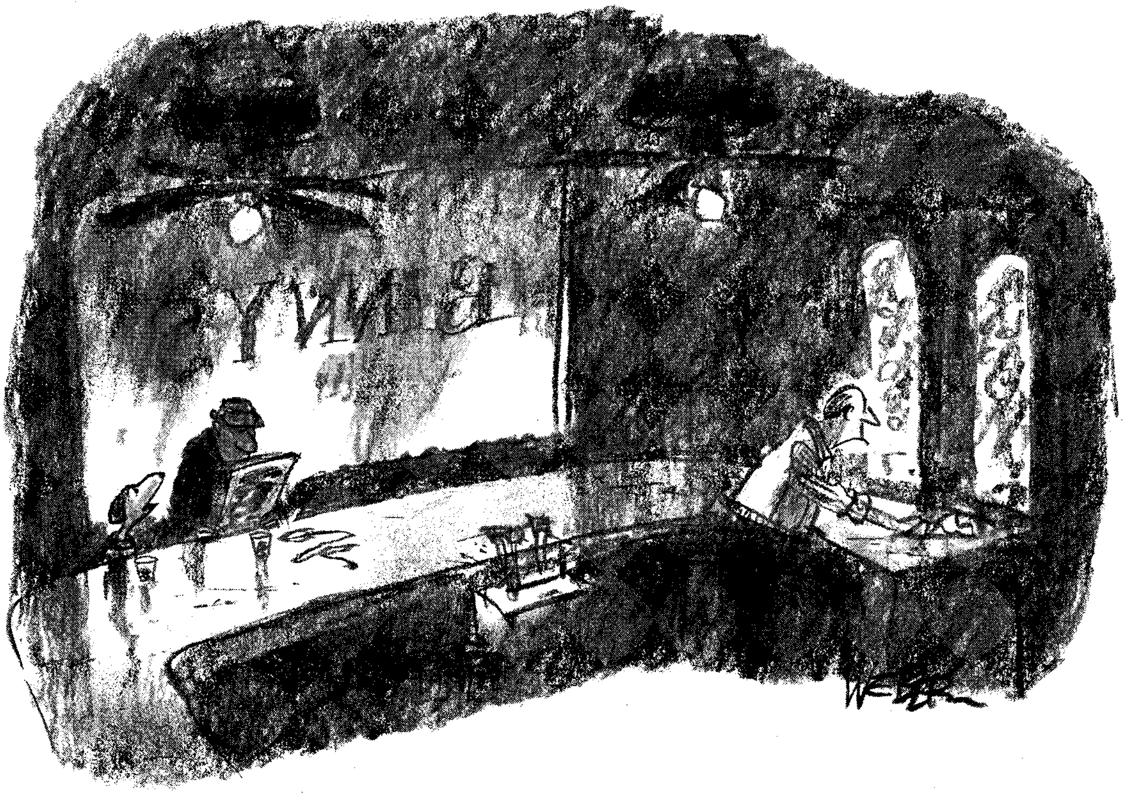
"I'm looking for a good man who won't get in the way."

Dan Goldin, the NASA head, described those vehicles to me as "heavy, expensive, multi-decadal spacecraft." They took so long to build, he lamented, that by the time they were launched they were practically obsolete. His motivational mantra for the modern NASA, "Faster, Better, Cheaper," has apparently sealed the fate of such behemoths. The last planetary mission of its kind, the Cassini mission to Saturn, which is to lift off next October, is currently being made ready in a high-bay clean room, the size of an airplane hangar, at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, in Pasadena.

Last May, when I visited J.P.L., one of the planetary scientists offered to show me Cassini under construction. Watching the assembly process through a picture window from the scaffold of a visitors' gallery, I tried to pick out the ingredients of the spacecraft from the several garages' worth of instrument components hanging on the walls, stacked on platforms, and freestanding about the floor. Three men dressed in white outfits, much like the one Woody Allen wore when he played the role of a sperm, were fitting pieces together on Cassini's skeletal frame. They moved slowly and deliberately. There was none of the easy swagger one sees at an ordinary construction site, where the guys swing their hammers in a routine rhythm. This is the only machine of its kind anywhere in the world, I found myself thinking. It will take at least another year to build and test all its complex parts. And when they get it finished they will drive it cross-country by truck to Cape Canaveral, load it on a Titan IV rocket, and shoot it on its way to Saturn, nine hundred million miles across the solar system.

Outside the assembly facility, on a sunny Southwest afternoon, the San Gabriel Mountains hovered on the brink of visibility. Their massive shapes faded in and out of sight, reduced to surreality by intervening smog—an eloquent reminder of obscuring effects on the Earth's atmosphere.

As Cassini (named for the seventeenth-century astronomer who detected the dark gap in Saturn's rings) is slowly approaching the launchpad, the Hubble



"Look at me when I'm talking to you!"

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telescope is keeping the best available eye on Saturn. The Hubble's high-resolution images are clear enough to pick up storm systems on the face of the planet, and its ability to observe at infrared wavelengths has allowed researchers to map Saturn's largest moon, Titan, right through the thick orange smog of its atmosphere. Titan, larger than either Mercury or Pluto, has long fostered visions of possible life-forms. When Cassini arrives in the vicinity of Saturn, in 2004, a probe, built by the European Space Agency, will parachute down through Titan's atmosphere, which is predominantly nitrogen, and investigate conditions there.

What Hubble lacks in proximity to Saturn it makes up for in persistence. By virtue of being parked in low Earth orbit, the telescope can react to news reports and weather developments concerning the outer planets. Hubble captured a graceful triple ring-plane crossing on Saturn last year. About every fifteen years, the rings orient themselves more or less edge on to the Earth over a period of several months. At such times the rings become virtually invisible—just a pencil-thin black shadow across Saturn's equator. While the glare of the rings was absent last summer, astronomers using the Hubble went hunting for undiscovered Saturnian moons (in addition to the eighteen already known), and identified two more.

The most memorable of the recent Hubble images were all shot by one instrument: Hubble's Wide Field and Planetary Camera 2, installed during the December, 1993, repair mission. In the eyes of people like Dave Crisp, a member of the team that designed and built the camera at the Jet Propulsion Lab, its work may surpass that of spacecraft like Cassini. "In the beginning, I think people wondered what the Hubble could possibly add to the data collected by spacecraft that had actually flown past or gone into orbit around another planet," Crisp said. "But you have to remember that most of those missions were designed in the late nineteen-sixties and early nineteen-seventies, and they took their images with what amounted to an old television camera. The Voyager instrumentation was state of the art when it was launched, but, boy, by the time it reached Neptune, in 1989, it was the Stone Age. The Hubble at least represents eighties-vintage technology. And the new camera illustrates what you can do with nineties technology."

Which is?

"Whenever we look at an object with an instrument that's ten times better than its predecessor, we almost always learn something new and fundamental about that object."

Crisp has wallpapered his windowless office at J.P.L. with Hubble planet views, giving the most square footage to his two personal favorites, Mars and Neptune.

"Hubble provided an opportunity to observe Mars in a way that we had never had before—not even from the Viking missions that orbited and landed there," he said. "Those spacecraft didn't have instruments that were sensitive at the range of wavelengths Hubble can cover. As a result, Mars has always been portrayed as a barren rock. It's not. It's actually an interesting place." Crisp's travel-brochure-style pinup of Mars shows high, wispy clouds over the afternoon portion of the planet and low-lying ground fog where the Martian morning is breaking. Crisp pointed to a place where a catastrophic flood had occurred perhaps more than three billion years ago, when climate conditions on Mars were wetter—about when the now fossilized forms inside the Mars rock must have gained their foothold there. "This is the basin where the Pathfinder spacecraft will land on July 4, 1997," Crisp said, still pointing.

The Mars Pathfinder, one of the new breed of Discovery missions designed to fit the "Faster, Better, Cheaper" creed, is scheduled for launch on December 2nd. It carries a roving instrument package on wheels that will drive itself around the landing site to monitor the geology there for up to one month. Pathfinder leads a series of more than a dozen planned space probes bound for Mars in the next decade. (One of these, a Russian robot craft, crashed to earth on November 17th. Mars Global Surveyor, launched last month, is expected to begin orbiting Mars in September of 1997.) Within the next seven to nine years, NASA intends to send a mission that will pluck rocks from the Martian surface and ferry them to Earth.

For the Mars Pathfinder mission, scientists will rely on the Hubble telescope to scrutinize the area for them, in preparation for landing. Its resolution is sharp enough to find features as fine as a haze of airborne dust.

"From Hubble observations all through next March, April, and May, we'll be giving daily weather reports," Dave Crisp said, laughing with delight at the prospect. "With Hubble we can monitor physical processes and watch the surfaces of these bodies evolve over time. Planetary science didn't have a way to interpret the effects of change on a planet's atmosphere or surface. And maybe now through such observations we can come to understand these processes a little better, so we can actually start using the larger part of our solar system as a laboratory for studying how planets work."

The hard-rock guys (and girls) have been waiting all their lives for this continuous-run view of solar-system dynamics, where the unexpected occurs every moment.

"I picked planetary astronomy because things change a lot," Heidi Hammel, of M.I.T., an expert on Neptune, told me. "Generally speaking, with galaxies, if you miss it tonight you can look tomorrow night—or next week or next year or ten years from now—and nothing's going to happen. It's going to be the same ten thousand years from now, more or less. But the planets are very active. Any time you look, you don't know what you're going to see. You have to be *on*. You can't screw up. If you miss something, it's over, and it's not going to happen again."

On June 22nd of this year, the Hubble telescope set a new record for itself by taking its hundred-thousandth exposure after six years in space. The images carry more than scientific import. They excite the interest of schoolchildren and stir enthusiasm in the general public. The Space Telescope Science Institute posts its pretty planet pictures on the World Wide Web, for all to download. It also fills orders, through a photo contractor, for hardcopy prints. And John Trauger, a physicist at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and several of his colleagues are compiling a selection of Hubble shots to be published as a book.

"The Hubble results interest people because they push back the darkness," Trauger told me. His own research, on the atmosphere of Jupiter, came from his boyhood interest in the behavior of light. "Astronomers have their own way of looking at things, which is probably not the way everybody does," he conceded. "Scientists do what fascinates them, and what fascinates them is not something you can discover with science. They're interested in investigating where planets come from, say, not because science tells them to do that, but because as human beings they find that interesting. They go after questions they consider worth the investment of a lifetime."

Trauger rummaged among piles of glossy photographs and fished out a picture of Saturn, shimmering in soft light and bisected by the dark line of the rings seen edge on. "This is a thing of beauty, I think," he said. "It's art work. Exquisite, really." He picked up another eight-by-ten print, of an immense region inside the Eagle Nebula where new stars are forming. This photograph, which appeared in press reports all over the world, must be the Hubble Space Telescope's most emotion-laden image yet—an icon to rival the Apollo photograph of the Earth taken from the surface of the moon. It depicts three eerie pillars of dark dust and gas thrusting up into a blue iridescence sprinkled with newborn stars. The pillars glow from the heat of star birth: a deep red fades to halos of gold at their margins. Whorls of interstellar dust alternately billow into cliff-top peaks and trail off in wispy webs of stellar Spanish moss.

When Keith Noll, at the Space Telescope Science Institute, showed me a poster-size blowup of this same spectacle on the wall of a conference room, he had run his forefinger over it, tracing sections that people had compared to a cat, a gargoyle, the erosion-carved needles of Bryce Canyon, the face of Jesus. Then he stepped back to view the whole with me, having said nothing about the towering, celestial-sized phallus at the center of the scene. Its presence seemed to insist that generative forms in nature, whether inorganic or alive, may take only certain well-defined shapes, which repeat themselves from one scale to another across the universe.

Trauger's smaller version of the latter-day creation scene retained all the power of the big picture. Even reduced to the size of a postage stamp, the picture's star-studded pillars would grab you.

Trauger asked me to imagine that I was looking right into a huge dark cloud of cold dust. He said the stellar wind from the newly formed stars had eaten a hole in the side of the cloud, and that the pillars were being sculpted by ultraviolet radiation—"chipping away, like rain coming down." The bright spots, resembling lighted birthday-cake candles, on the dense, dark pillars marked the sites where stars had just begun to burn. And the smallest entities of all—little pointed projections along the pillar walls, and free-floating globules of dust—were really as wide, each of them, as a sun surrounded by a whole solar system.

Dan Goldin also had a large framed print of the Hubble's Eagle Nebula image hanging in his NASA office. "I show that picture all over," Goldin told me as both of us stared at it from the other side of the room.

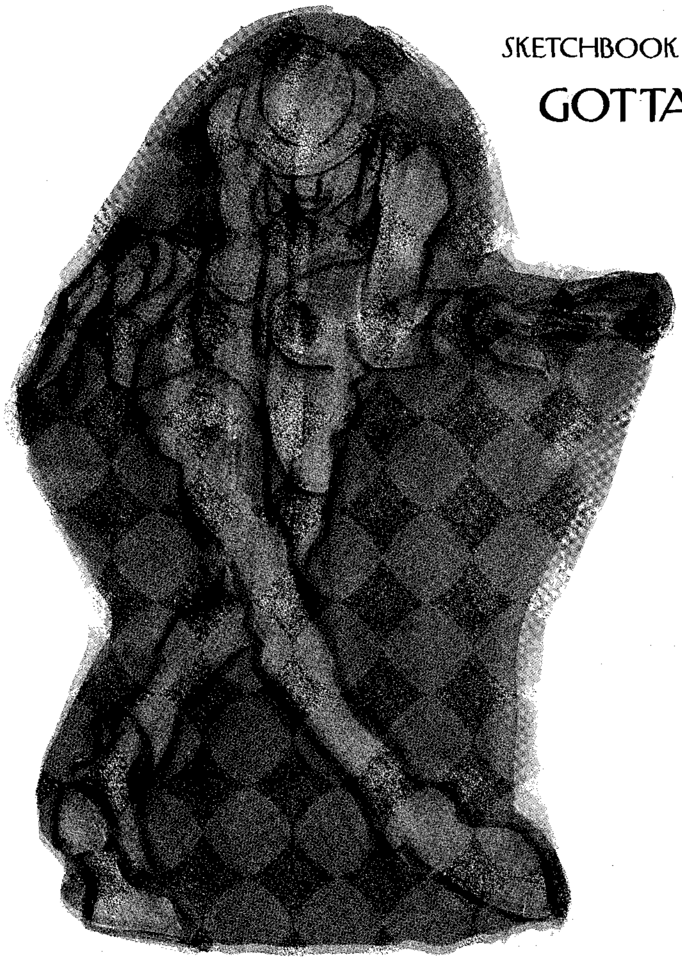
"What does it say to you?" I asked him.

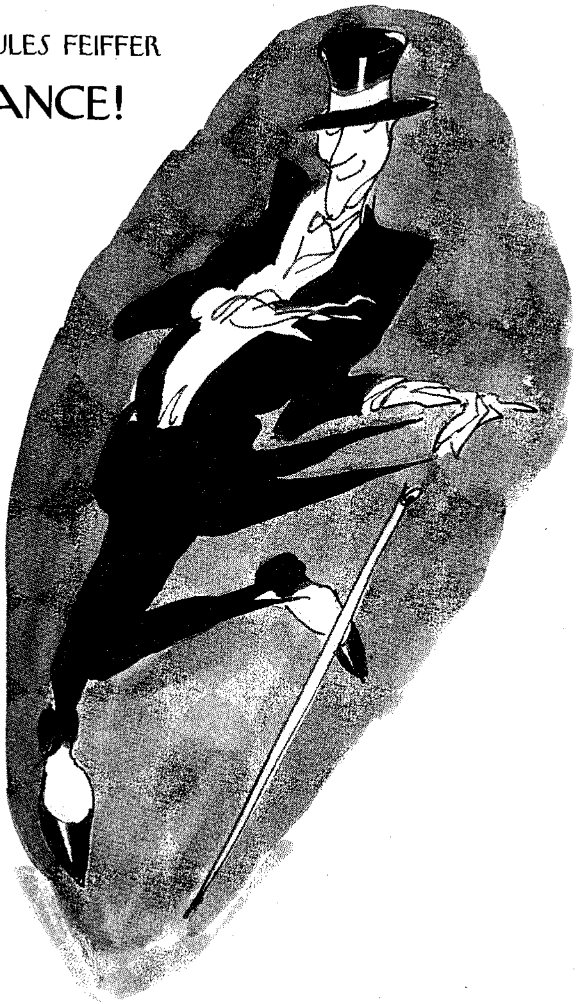
"It's a question, not a statement," he replied. "You ask fifty questions after you look at that picture." We both kept our eyes riveted on it, waiting for his feelings to take words. "That cloud on the left is six trillion miles high," Goldin said, finally. "That's one light-year. The first thing that comes to my mind is: How, as a species, did we attain the intellect that went into making the tool that could take that picture? Seven thousand light-years from Earth, and look at the clarity we got in that picture. That picture is creation. You're seeing *stars* being formed, if we understand it right." He paused again, then added, "When I showed this picture in Bozeman, Montana, the local merchants stood up and applauded. They were just struck by it. With all the problems of today, people are able to look at that picture and say, 'We need to move out into the future.' "

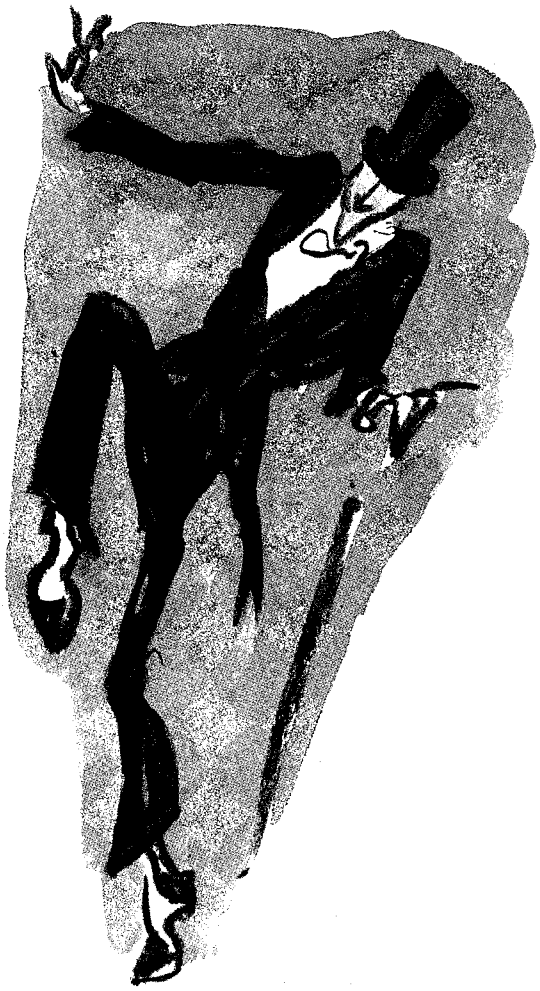
Goldin returned to his own fond futuristic vision of finding and photographing an Earth-like planet less than a hundred light-years from here, perhaps within the next fifteen or twenty-five years. "*This* picture," he said, nodding appreciatively at the Eagle Nebula on the wall, "is goose-bump material. *That* picture"—and he gestured vaguely toward Earth's undiscovered twin—"is tears." ◆

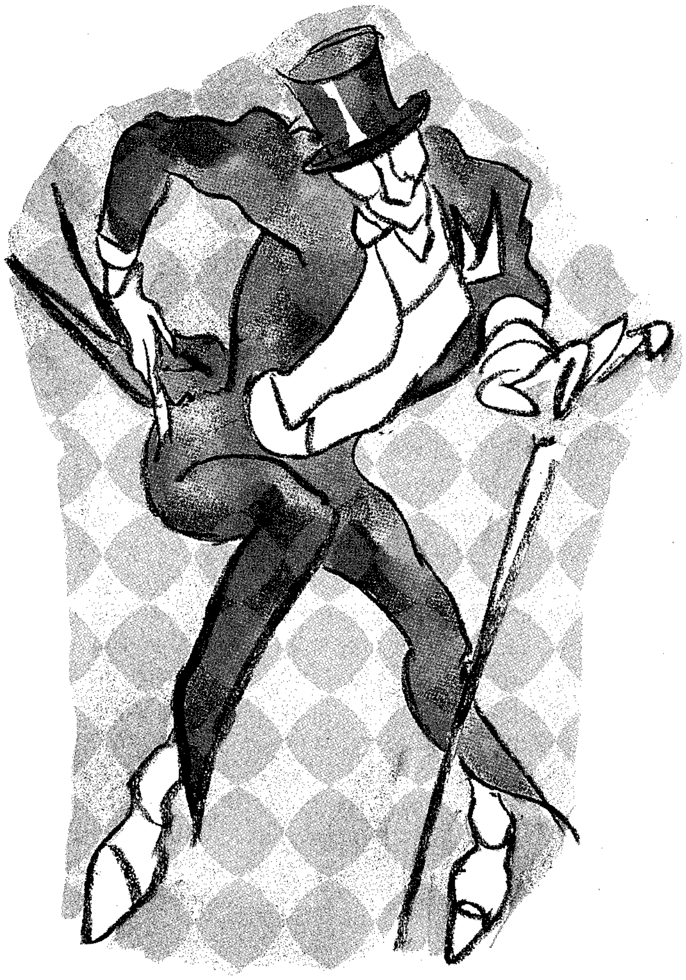
SKETCHBOOK BY JULES FEIFFER

GOTTA DANCE!





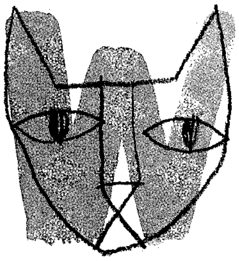




FICTION

THE CATS

BY JOHN UPDIKE



WHEN my mother died, I inherited eighty acres of Pennsylvania and forty cats. Eighty-two and a half acres, to be exact; the cats were beyond precise counting. They seethed in a mewing puddle of fur at the back door, toward five o'clock, when they could hear her inside the kitchen turning the clunky handle of the worn-out can opener that jutted from the doorframe, beside the sweating refrigerator. One Christmas, when she was in her seventies, I had bought her a new can opener, but in time it, too, went dull and wobbly under its burden of use; I thriftily wondered whether or not it would last her lifetime. In her eighties, she as well was wearing out, as each of my visits to the farmhouse made clear. Walking to the mailbox and feeding the cats were the sole exertions she could still perform—she who had performed so many, from her girlhood of horse-riding and collegiate hockey playing to the days when, moving her family to this isolated farm, she had led us by working like a man, wielding the chain saw and climbing the extension ladder and swinging herself jubilantly up into the wide tractor seat.

She had been born here, in the age of mule-drawn plows. Neither my father nor I had understood her wish to return to this wearying place of work, weeds, bugs, heat, mud, and wildlife. She had led us in imposing some order—renovating the old stone farmhouse, repairing the barn, planting rows of strawberries and asparagus and peas, mowing a lawn back into the shadow of the woods. But, after I moved away and my father died, the fertile wilderness threatened to reclaim everything. Even the windowsills, the next owner of the house has discovered, were rotten and teeming with termites and wood lice. From inside the attic, the shingle roof looked like a starry sky. Not only did my mother allow mice and flying squirrels to nest in the house—she fed them sunflower seeds, whose shells, the new owner discovered, tumbled by the peck from their caches in the woodwork. The house in my mother's last years smelled of stacked newspapers that never made it to the barn, and of cat-food cans in paper bags, and of damp dog. Her overfed dog, Josie, was going lame along with her mistress; she never got any exercise. It was pathetic, how happy old Josie was to accompany me to the barn with the papers, and out to our mountain of tin in the woods with the cans.

Was it my imagination, or did my mother use to hum as she revolved the handle, like some primitive, repetitive musical instrument, emptying one gelatinous cylinder of cat food after another into the set of old cake tins that served the cats as dinnerware on the cement back porch? Feeding these half-feral animals amused and pleased her—quite improperly, I thought. Their mounting numbers seemed to me a disaster, which grew worse every time I paid a filial visit, in spite of the merciful inroads of various feline diseases and occasional interventionary blasts from the guns of interested neighbors. Some neighbors threatened to report her to the humane society, and others, furtively, dropped off unwanted kittens in the night.

Being my mother's son, I could follow her reasoning right into this quagmire. If you didn't feed the cats, they would eat all the birds. She loved birds, that was why she had begun to feed the cats. Sitting right in the house with its closed windows, talking away on the sofa, she would cock her head and say, "The towhee is upset about something," or, "The mockingbird is telling a joke," or, at night, coming into my room in her white nightgown, her eyes going wide as if scaring a child, "Listen to Mr. Whippoorwill."

In deference to my asthma she had never let the cats in the house, but the day after she died they could hear me through the screen door as I churned away with the can opener. I spoke aloud to them, much as she had. "I know, I know," I said. "You're ravenous. The lady who used to feed you is dead. I'm just her son, her only child. I don't live here, I live in Princeton, New Jersey, where I have a job with the fabled university, a four-bedroom house, a haughty and elegant wife called Andrea, and two grown children, one of them with a child of her own. I don't want to be here, I never did. And if you can think of a better place, go to it, because, my fine feline friends, *the dole is ending*. The cat food is down to its last case, and I'm here for just two more days. What are you going to do then? Beats me—it's a real problem, frankly. Well, you shouldn't have gotten sucked into the system. You shouldn't have all become teen-age mothers."

When I put the brimming cake tins, which smelled disagreeably of horse meat and pulverized fish, down on the bare cement, the cat bodies clustered around them like the petals of a fur flower. Yet the older cats managed, in the skirmish, to make way for the kittens among them. The calico kittens had mottled, wide-browed faces like pansies. The black-and-whites suggested Rorschach tests, or maps of a simpler planet than ours. My mother used to name the cats that came to the porch, and would say of one, "Isabel is a rather lackadaisical mother," or of a wary, beat-up tom, "Jeffrey has a limp today. His boots must pinch."

The cats that stayed in the barn didn't earn names. When I opened the top half of a stall door, light glinted from eyes in the straw as if from bits of pale glass, and a violent slither sent several cats squirming under the partition into the next stall. The pan I set down would be empty, though, an hour later. The barn cats paid for their shyness with relatively dismal lives; they were prone to the diseases of the inbred, and a probe of the straw, left over from the days when cows bedded here, would turn up a dried corpse—a matted pelt as stiff as a piece of leather, the dead ani-

ANDERS WENNGREN

mal's head frozen into an eyeless snarl.

Toward the end, my mother had been too frail to make it down to feed the barn cats, so my pan was only half-consumed the first night. The barn cats that had not perished or fled had become porch cats. "What are we going to *do*?" I asked the prowling animals as I returned from the barn in the early-September dusk. "I can't give up my whole civilized life just to keep feeding you ingrates."

Moving here when I was a boy had indeed felt like the loss of civilization. No phone, no electricity, no plumbing: a terrible regress. Amish workmen came and hammered snug a bright cedar-shingle roof and rather nicely built in the living room what none of the house's previous inmates had needed: a bookcase. In time plumbers came and rendered the outhouse obsolete, and the electric company marched tall creosoted poles down through the orchard. Television entered the house, and instead of listening to weather reports and corn prices and country music on the Reading radio station we were watching the Philadelphia news, first in black-and-white and then in color. But I could never shake my impression that the farm was a trap from which my clear duty was to escape.

I ASKED my neighbor to the south, Dwight Potteiger, "What shall I do about all the cats?"

He grows sweet corn and snap beans for market and is second in charge of the township school-bus fleet. He confided to me, "I used to ask Irma, 'What's Frank going to do, in case you pass on, with all the cats?' She'd say, so serene-like, 'Oh, Frankie will find a way. He always has. He's kept me here in style for twenty years.' "

She had become a widow in her sixties. My contributions to her upkeep, added to my father's pension and their savings, had been barely adequate and, now that she was dead, seemed quite niggardly.

"She exaggerated," I said.

"Well, now, one thing she didn't exaggerate any was the size of that herd of cats. I can't imagine what-all money she put into cat food. She'd call me up after shopping this last year or two, and I'd go carry the cases for her into the kitchen."

"Thank you," I said. Dwight was the son I should have been.

"A week or so, she'd have another trunkful to lug in." Was he airing a bottled-up grievance, or trying to bring her back to life for me?

As apologetically as I could, I said, "They were company for her, of a sort."

"They were stark wild," Dwight said. "If I'd show up in the evening, they'd scatter off the porch like they'd never seen a man with a beard before." His beard had alarmed me, too, when he first began to grow it—in this part of the country beards were left to Amishmen and to ancestors in stiff-leaved photograph albums. This beard had a surprising amount of red in it, among bristles of gray and brown, and gave its wearer a mischievous-looking authority that rather cowed me.

"She began to feed them, you know," I wearily explained, "to keep them from eating the birds."

He chuckled. "That was the theory, I know. But I used to tell her, 'Irma, I still wouldn't say your place here is any paradise for our fair-feathered friends.' She didn't appreciate my saying that.

"But I know for a fact she lost a couple nests of swallows, when the cats figured out how to climb the old stable doors. Barn swallows are hard to discourage, but Irma's finally did stop coming back."

I hurried on, away from such sadness. "My question is, Dwight, what do I do about them? The cats. I can't just leave them to starve in the landscape."

I was begging, he could see. Though I knew he thought it, he did not ask, "Why not?" He was indulging my fancies, as he had indulged my mother's.

"I have to get back to New Jersey," I said, "after I see the lawyer in town and the pastor up at the church and the undertaker again."

He shifted his weight, standing there. "Well, I could take the shotgun and go over at suppertime when they gather on the porch. That would take out a few, and then the others might get the clue and skedaddle. If you'd like, I could ask Adam to come down with his woodchuck rifle and we'll run a pincer operation. We need owner's permission, but you're giving that, isn't that right?"

"I sure am. We have to do *some*thing." Adam Wipf was the neighbor to the north, a plump orchard-keeper with a multitude of children and now grandchildren. We were, we three proprietors, about the same age, in our late fifties. They had been boys here when we moved. I had tried playing with them, but they had stunted ball-handling skills. An opaque earthiness about them frightened me—reminded me of death.

"I would be *very* grateful," I emphasized, and in my own ears my voice sounded citified, weak, patronizing.

Dwight said, "We don't want you worrying, over there with all those other smart folks at Princeton." I had avoided mentioning Princeton, naming my home as "New Jersey," but my mother had made no secret of my career, and I could not accept my neighbor's favor without accepting his needle. My mother had shown a good grasp of these country transactions: a little "kidding" for every kindness. She rented fields to her neighbors, and they helped her out in blizzards and mechanical difficulties. If she could not stay on the land, it would likely go under to a developer, and the neighborhood would be changed forever, with septic tanks and fast traffic and higher taxes and a lowered water table. It had suited me, too, to keep her on her farm, out of my life. I had begun to worry, though, how she would survive this coming winter. She took any decision out of my hands by dropping dead at the kitchen sink, frying herself a pork chop while the Channel 4 evening-news team was chattering in the living room.

NEXT morning, as I fed them, I told the cats, "Eat up, sweeties—your days are numbered." I had half expected rifle shots to ring out in my sleep, but the day broke still and dewy. The cement porch was decorated with wet paw prints. A continent of gray cloud was moving up into the sky beyond the telephone poles and the surviving orchard trees. When we moved here, there had been a pump on this porch, and all our water had been drawn up into pots and buckets. At first, it had been a challenge to my strength to work the metal handle through the first dry shoves, before the water began to flow. By the time we got plumbing and an electric pump, the action had become as automatic as turning on a faucet. Like turning the can-opener handle, pumping had its own catchy rhythm, its mechanical song.

My mother had set out a few potted geraniums at the corners of the porch and hung wind chimes from an overhead hook. She had seen them in one of the innumerable catalogues she received, and had ordered them; the idea amused her. It was a fortunate gift in life, it occurred to me, to be easily amused. These chimes, and inquisitive scratchings from inside the walls, had not kept me from sleeping, though I had feared they would. The day's appointments clarified my future: I would get back to Princeton by nighttime, and in two more days would bring my family here for my mother's funeral, with a moving truck to take away what of her furniture we decided not to give to the auction house.

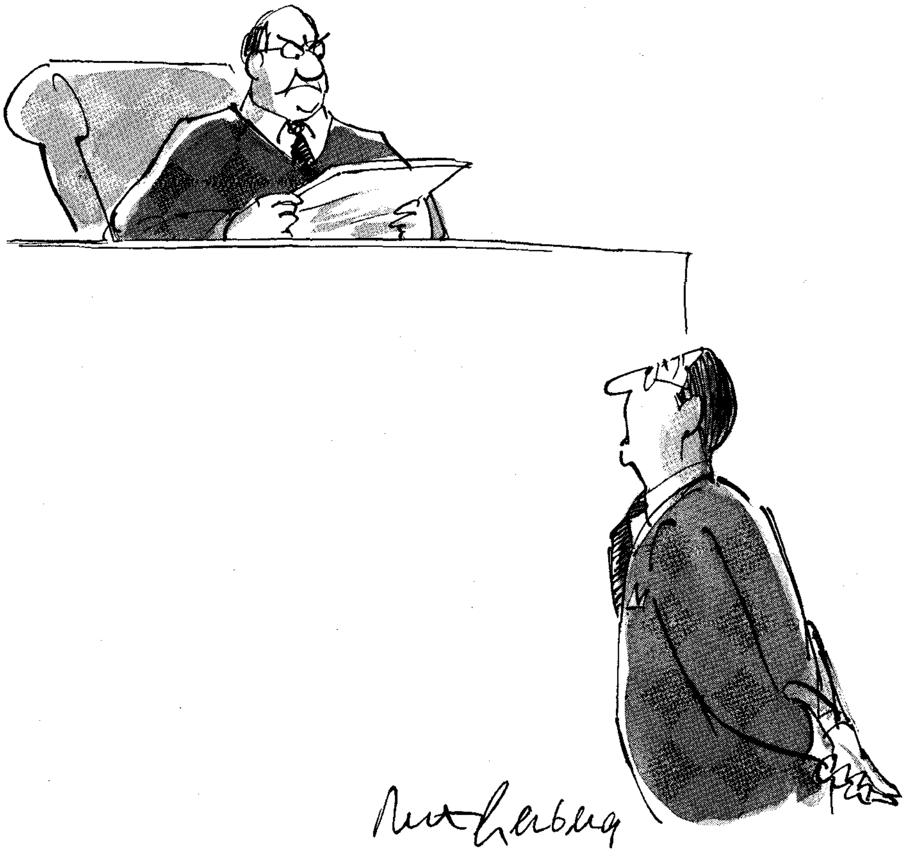
Heading up the road with Josie in the car, I swung in to the Wipfs' and asked Adam if he would keep an eye on the house. He and his wife live in a little new ranch house close to the road; his parents still live in the sandstone house, a twin to my mother's, down by the barn that he had turned into a fruit outlet. He smiled as he said he would, implying that it wouldn't be necessary. This part of the world might be changing, but people didn't yet go around robbing the houses of the recently dead.

"I really appreciate," I said, "your helping Dwight shoot the poor cats."

He looked puzzled. "I haven't heard any about that, but it's I guess not so big a problem," he said, as if he were reassuring my mother that he would get her tractor started.

When, two days later, at dusk, my family arrived in a station wagon and a yellow rental truck, the number of cats gathered on the back porch seemed no smaller than it had been, though visibly more frantic. They yowled upward, showing their curved fangs, their arched rough tongues, the rosy membranes of their throats. A few kittens were staggering with weakness, yet joined in the common mew of protest, of need. I kicked my way through the crowd but, once safely inside, gave my son, Max, a twenty and asked him to drive to the grocery store in Fern Hollow and buy enough cat food to see us through. He looked alarmed and said he always got lost in Fern Hollow. My wife heard us and came over protectively. "Max hasn't been to that store more than three times in his life," Andrea said. "When we came to visit we always went to the supermarket in Morgantown. Why can't he go *there*?"

"It's two miles further and closes at five-thirty. Also my mother thought the



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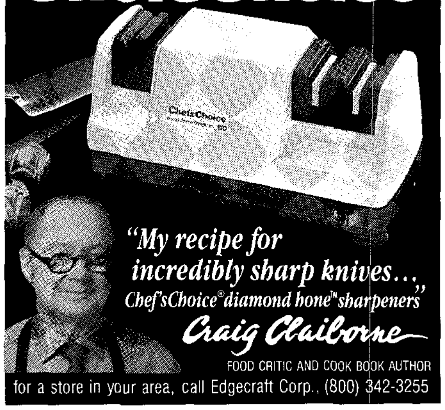

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little stores should be patronized to keep them in business.”

My wife sighed and rolled her eyes upward. “Your mother is dead, darling. We can buy at big stores if we want to.”

“It’s *closed*, I just told you. We can’t stay here with these cats yowling all night.”

“Maybe they’ll stop yowling once we turn off the lights,” she said. “Isn’t it time they faced reality?”

“*I’ll* go, dammit,” I said, thinking they would all protest at having me, the leader of our mourning party, leave them alone in the old stone house, with its rustling rodents and airless, ill-lit rooms. We were all still in the kitchen, where my mother’s hand-wound mantel clock had stopped ticking and chiming. Its melancholy, gulping gong had kept watch over my insomnia on many a boyhood night.

Hiram, my daughter’s husband, said, “I’ll go for you, Frank, if you’ll tell me the way.”

He was being kind, but he is also unctuous and prematurely balding, and I let my irritation with the others taint my reply: “It would take too long to explain. There are about six forks and none of them are marked.”

“*He’s* the country boy,” my wife told Hiram with a collusive smile. “Let’s let him go.” To me she said, “You love those windy old roads.”

It was a relief, as it always had been, to get out of the house and into the car, and onto the rolling freedom of the leafy roads. Newish ranch houses, built in homely mixtures of wood and sandstone and vinyl siding, added their window lights and mowed yards to the scattered habitations that I remembered. My mother used to recall being allowed to ride in the gig with her father when he caught the train into Reading at the Fern Hollow station, and then, though she was only nine or ten, bringing the gig back to the farm by herself. Of course, the horse knew the way. In the darkness, thinking of a little beribboned girl allowed to bring a gig through three miles of forest and tobacco fields, I missed one of the forks. Rather than turn around, I took what I remembered as a shortcut, but it led to a dead end at an abandoned gravel pit. It took forever, it seemed, to backtrack and find Fern Hollow. But Stoudt’s Keystone was still open, with its two gas pumps and side porch loaded with horse feed and sacks of fertilizer. Behind the counter, Roy Stoudt nodded in recognition, though I was disguised in a citified shirt and blazer. When I told him what I wanted, he said, “I was wondering how those cats would manage.”

“Not so well. The neighbors promised to shoot some but they haven’t yet. I need just a case, to tide us over.” I pictured the kittens staggering with hunger and said, “Maybe two cases.”

“Your mother favored the protein beef mix and the seafood medley.”

“Fine. Anything.”

“She used to say they turned up their noses at pork; they were Old Testament cats. She was a funny one. You never quite knew when she was kidding.”

“Yeah, that was a problem for me even.” In Princeton, I would have said “even for me.” The local lilt was not hard to slip into. Stoudt’s Keystone was a long, dark store, its floorboards hollowed by wear, with gleaming nails, where generations had shuffled past the cash register. It still sold little tubes of flypaper and plugs of chewing tobacco. I had trouble deciding, amid the abundance of packaged carbohydrates, which brand of pretzels to buy. I settled for a bag that claimed “NEW! Lo Fat, Lo Sodium.”

As he rang up my purchases, Roy went on, “She used to say to me, ‘My boy thinks I’m crazy, feeding all these cats, but it’s my only luxury. I don’t drive a Mercedes, and I don’t wear mink.’ ”

“I never said crazy. I may have said funny.”

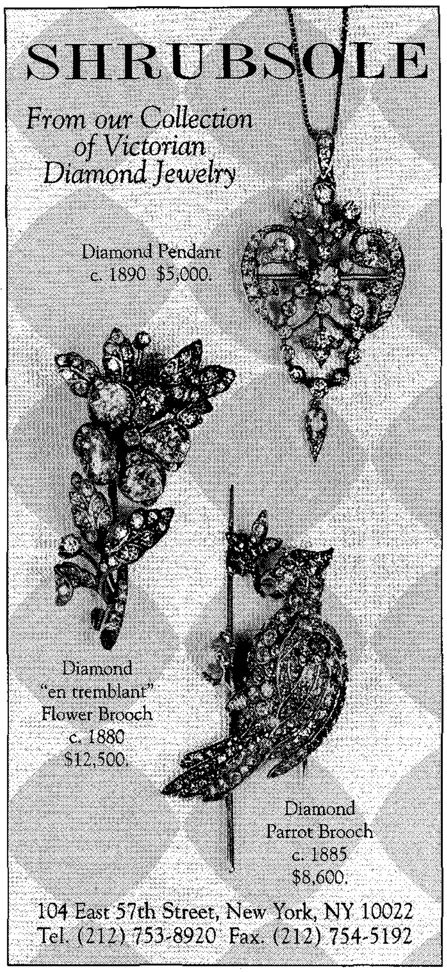
“She did trap some and take them down to the humane society,” he pointed out. “It was just nature kept getting ahead of her.” There was a slyness mixed in with his amiability; I sensed how much of a local joke she and her cats had been. “There,” he said. “I’ve given you the discount for quantity I used to give to her.”

“You don’t have to do that.” I could have bitten my tongue. I could hear his response coming, like the pedantic distinction, made much of in elementary school, between “can” and “may.”

“I know I don’t *have* to, Frank, but I *want* to,” Roy said. “We’ll miss your mother around these parts.”

The cat-food section of Stoudt’s Keystone would certainly miss her. I said what I should have said in the first place: “Thanks for the discount, Roy.”

Outside, under the moth-battered lights, bits of abandoned railroad gleamed in the parking lot, where it hadn’t paid to



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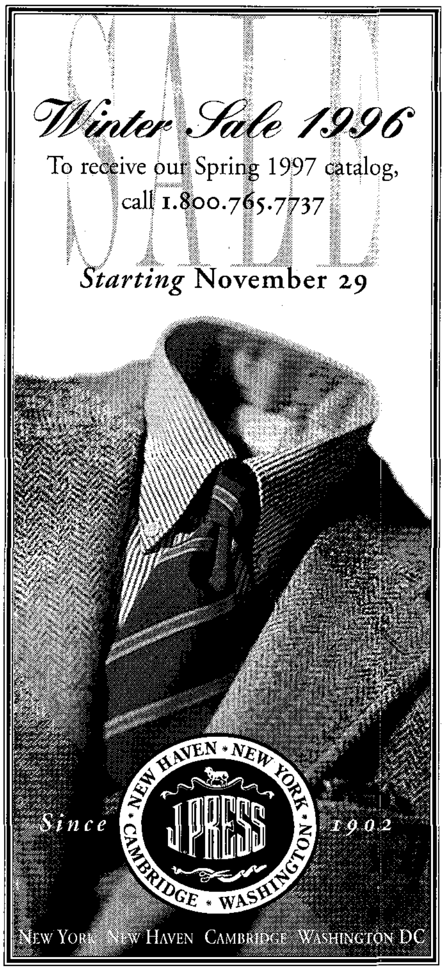

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wrest the iron tracks from the blacktop. They crossed the little road, pointing on either side to tunnels of darkness. The woods had still not fully reclaimed the right-of-way; the rails were gone but the spalls and creosoted ties had been left and discouraged growth.

The morning of the funeral, I began to clean out my mother's crammed desk and found a little note on brittle blue stationery in an envelope addressed simply "Frank." It said:

> In the event of my death I wish to be buried in the simplest possible ceremony, in the least expensive available coffin. Instead of flowers, I ask that contributions be directed to the Boone Township Humane Society, R.F.D. 2, Box 88, Emmetstown, Penna.

I had done it all wrong. I had bought her the second-most-expensive casket in the undertaker's basement, cherrywood with shiny brass rails to carry it by, and had arranged with the Lutheran pastor for the usual Lutheran service, with a catered lunch afterward. The announcement of the death in the Reading paper had said nothing about giving money to the humane society. Nor did her note say anything about what I was to do with the cats.

After the burial service, Dwight sidled up to me on the cemetery grass and said, "I haven't been able to come over with the rifle these last days—we're getting the buses ready for the school year, there's been a ton of maintenance. And Adam has the late peaches coming in. But we'll get to it, absolutely."

The sight of the cherrywood coffin, with its brass fittings, sinking into the clean-sliced earth was still gleaming in my brain. I said, "Dwight, maybe it's too much to ask. Why don't you and Adam forget about it, and I'll try to think of something else. It's not your problem."

"No, now, we wouldn't want to do that," he said consolingly. He looked strange, in a navy-blue churchgoing suit under a noon sun on a weekday. Adam had brought his entire family, including three grandchildren, getting them out of the orchard and into their good clothes. A few other neighbors were there, and Martha Stoudt from down in Fern Hollow—she was the caterer. Roy had stayed behind the counter at the store. Three of my female high-school classmates showed up, touchingly, and a business associate, a fellow-accountant, of my father's who I thought had long ago died. In fact, though older than my parents, he was wiry and tan. He spent half the year in Florida, and didn't lack for dancing partners down there; this last was confided with a wink. Senility showed only in his tears, which refused to dry up in the outdoors, even with the early-fall sun beating down and a dry wind blowing on the cemetery hill. He cried for all of us, it seemed, while smiling and hopping about on the grass.

Martha Stoudt and the pastor's wife had been too optimistic about the funeral attendance; there seemed mountains of potato salad and cole slaw and sliced bread and cold cuts waiting for us in the church function room. The food held us fast like flies; we murmured and circled, though the farmers were anxious to get back to their farms and my high-school friends back to their jobs. All three women worked in welfare administration, oddly—government-sponsored mothers to the nation's hordes of orphans.

As for my mother, it is strange, once a life is over, how little there is to say about it. I could feel her in the room, polite but taking sardonic note, for future reference, of our collective failure to quite rise to the occasion. People had always struck her as inept, compared to animals. It galled me on her behalf that the minister, in the very strenuousness of his oratorical attempt to evoke my mother's elusive qualities, had forgotten to signal the organist to play "A Mighty Fortress." How many Lutherans get buried without hearing, one last time, "A Mighty Fortress"? I felt it as a scandal, albeit minor. Ignominiously my living kin gathered up all the uneaten food and went back to the forlorn house, with its rotting sills and teeming population of invited pests. The cats, though it was not their dinnertime, were swarming hopefully on the back porch; some of the barn cats had ventured up to the house and made gray streaks in retreat across the lawn as our car pulled in. The house was stuffy and still inside; Andrea went around tugging open the sticky windows, in contravention of my mother's theory that closed windows sealed the coolness in. She and our daughter, Nancy, were dying to get back to Princeton; we had left it to a neighbor to feed fat old Josie, along with our own sleek cocker spaniel. Max and I were to stay a day or two—whatever it took—and load up the truck and get the house clean enough for the real-estate agent to show. Everywhere we looked, from the refrigerator full of cold cuts and potato salad to an attic holding a half century's worth of broken furniture, crockery

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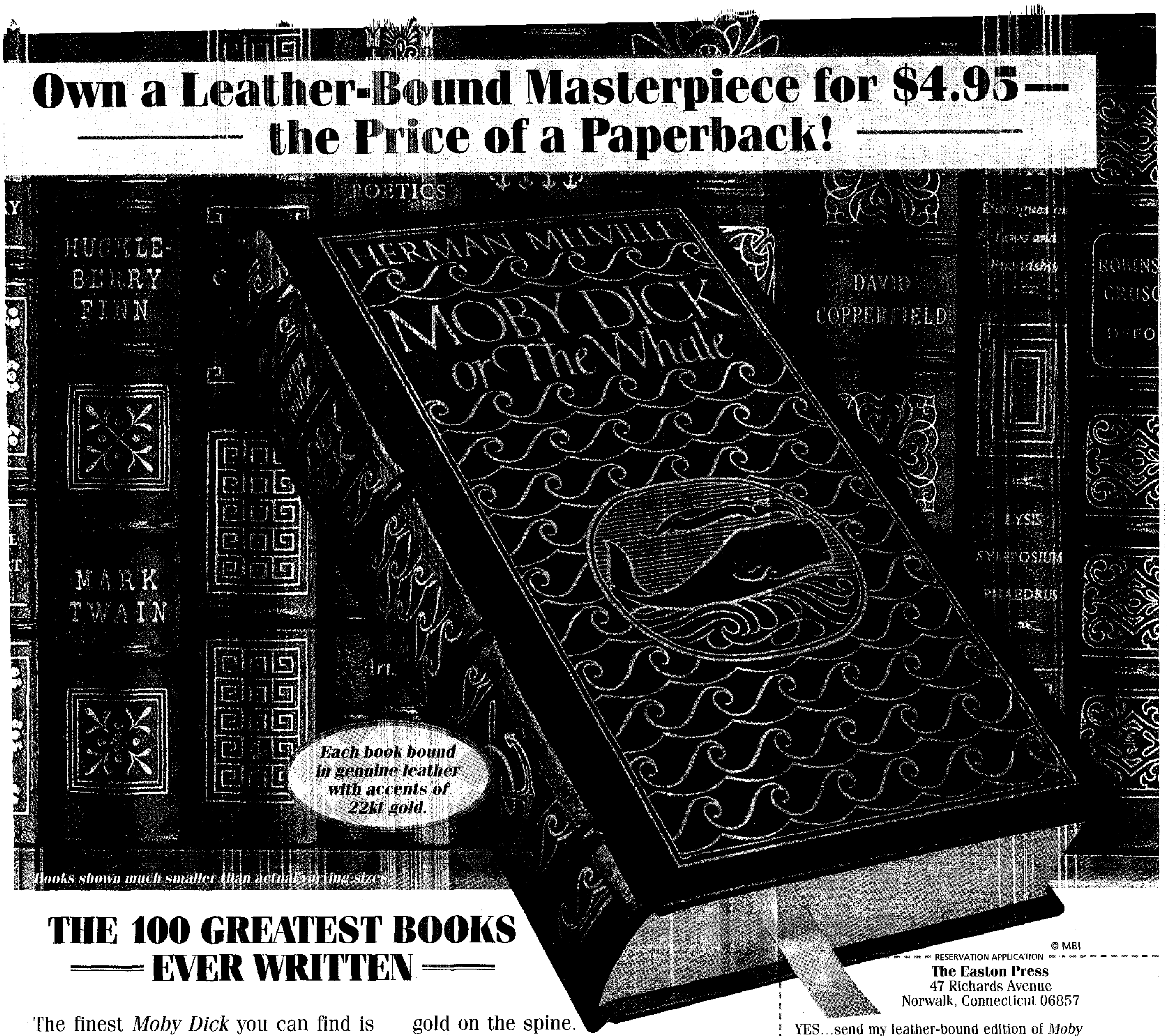

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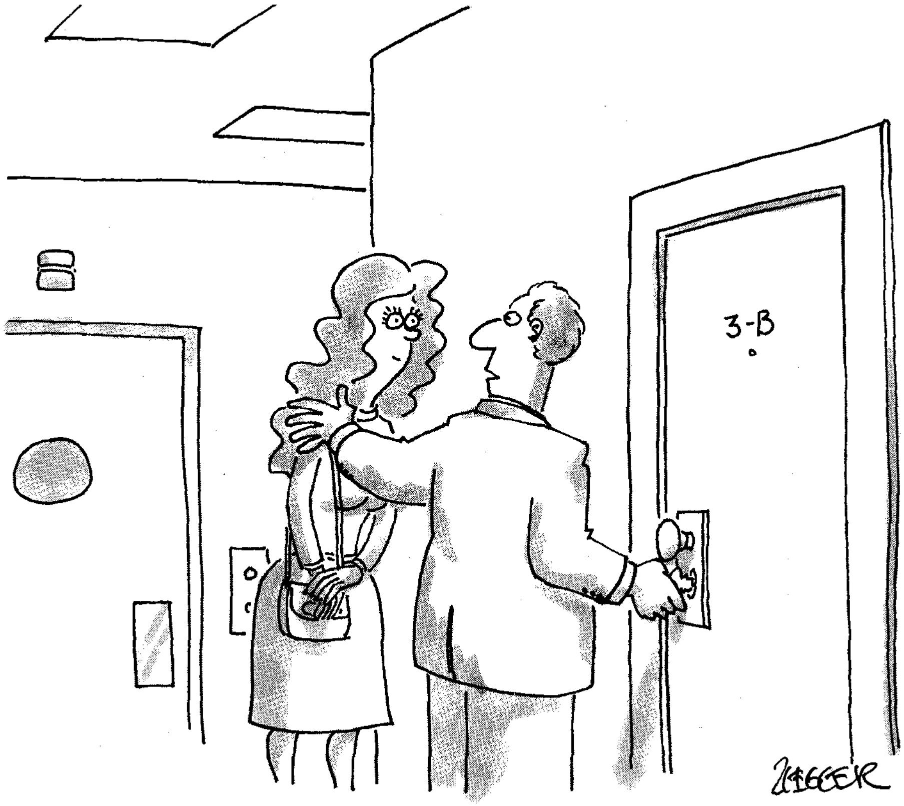

"Don't get the wrong idea, but I think I should tell you that all my furnishings are from Ikea."

wrapped in ancient brown newspapers, albums of ancestors whose names nobody now knew, and *Life* magazines of special historical interest, we were overwhelmed. Nancy put her one-year-old son, Peter, down upstairs for his nap. Andrea had a headache, Max and Hiram turned on the television set, and I escaped by getting in the car and driving to Emmetstown.

FOUR miles of back roads, crossing and recrossing a creek on rattling bridges, brought me to the outskirts of Emmetstown, where an ugly stencilled sign pointed the way to the Humane Society. I had been here a few times with my mother, delivering trapped cats. The society had lent her two galvanized cage traps a dozen years ago. She would bait them with liver pâté. On various weekend visits I had helped her lug her bizarre catch. Tomcats and new mothers were the hardest to carry, as they made the long cages pitch back and forth in their terror, hurling their bodies against the dropped doors and trying to bite and claw their way through the wire mesh. You handed them in over the Humane-Society counter and a stocky, pale teen-age girl would take them away and ten minutes later, looking slightly paler, would bring the cages back empty.

In the years since I had been here, there had been some refinements. From the concrete-floored rear of the complex there still drifted animal smells and yowls, but the front room looked more like an office, with framed certificates and prints of wildlife. The high bare counter was gone, and a walnut desk occupied the center of the shag-carpeted floor. Here sat a broad-shouldered bland woman with "big" hair, teased and tinted copper.

Her pale face lifted to me when I came in; her lips remained parted, so her front teeth showed in a semi-startled way I found appealing. Before I could introduce myself, she said, "I was sorry to read about your mother, Frank. She was a real nice lady. Such lovely manners, even when you could tell she was upset."

"When did you see her upset?"

"Oh, with the cats. Having to bring them in to be, you know, disposed of, when they were a lot like pets to her. She would say goodbye by name, sometimes. She used to say it was the tamest that trusted her enough to take the bait; the really wild ones never got caught."

"It was horrible, the way they multiplied."

"Well, they will, if you feed them." She added, as I grappled with this Malthusian truth, "That's the nature of the beast." Seeing me still baffled, she said, "It's hard."

"Yes," I agreed. "Hard. Do you have any ideas as to what I should do?"

"About the cats?"

"Absolutely." What else? I had no other problems that I knew of.

She thought and said, "Well, do you still have the traps?"

"I haven't looked, but I guess they're still in the barn."

"I ask because your mother hasn't been in for a couple of years at least."

"She got too weak to do it. A trap with a fighting cat in it isn't so easy to handle."

"Oh, I know." She spoke with an increasing gentleness, as if to a crazy man. Though her fingernails were short and unpainted, her face was made up with that faintly excessive care of minor officialdom—of small-town postmistresses and small-city lawyers' secretaries. I suddenly knew that this composed executive woman was the stocky girl of years ago, the teenage executioner. She had assumed I recognized her at once, as she had me.

A young male minion in dungarees and ponytail opened the door to the fragrant beyond, said a few unintelligible words, received a confirming nod, and closed the door.

Lamely I continued, "I think she got overwhelmed and couldn't see beyond dishing it out every day. There's an absolute *mountain* of tin cans in the woods!"

She changed the angle of her listening head, and her professional patience seemed momentarily strained. "What I started to suggest was, if you still have the traps in the barn, you could set them and bring in one or two every day. The ones you don't eventually catch will be so feral they'll keep to the woods."

"But I can't *stay!*"

She blinked at my fervor. Somehow she had seen me as replacing my mother in the little house, with its eighty-two acres of milkweed and horseflies and sandy red mud, as if my whole life had been killing time until I could take possession of my inheritance.

"I live in New Jersey!" I insisted. "I have to get back to my house, my job."

"You're putting your mom's place up for sale?"

"I have to! I can't take care of it!"

She pursed her lips slightly as she took this in. "It's considered a nice place around

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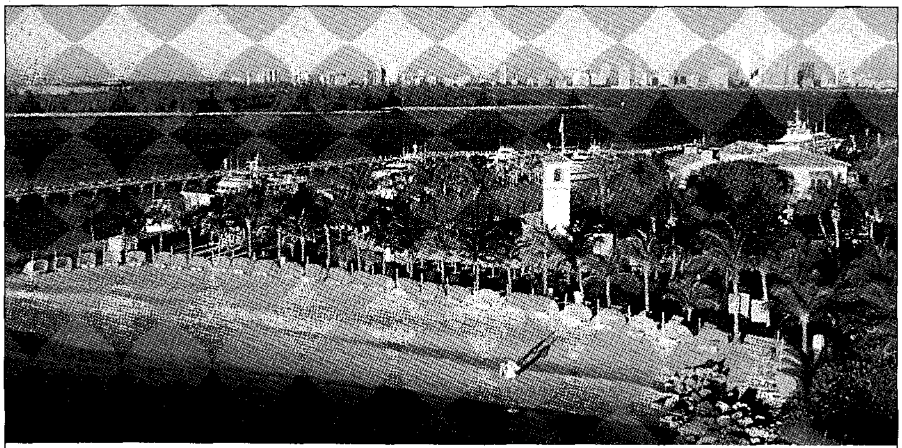

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here, but if you can't, well, you can't. Your mother wouldn't want you to do the impossible." Yet a loyalty to my mother drove her, after a pause, to go on, "Though she always spoke of you as the one who'd take charge. She'd say to me, 'Amy, I'm just holding the fort for Frank.' How many days *can* you stay, then?"

"Two at most."

She thoughtfully scratched below her dough-colored little ear and I caught a whiff of her perfume. "So, then. Bring the borrowed traps in, and we'll cross them off your mother's card. Otherwise I'd have to charge you."

"Fine. I'll do it tomorrow." I hoped she didn't expect me to bring them in loaded. I didn't have any liver pâté, for one thing.

"And then, you know, Frank, we have a man who does some trapping for us. He lives not far from here, and works out in your area, at the hardware store in Morgantown. He could set the traps at your place on his way to work and pick them up on his way back."

"That sounds wonderful. *Wonderful.* How much does he charge?" Like a frontiersman packing a firearm, I had brought a checkbook, just in case.

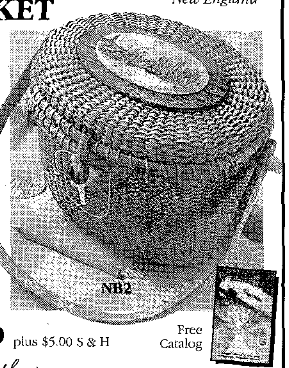
"Oh, nothing to you. It comes under township wildlife control. He does it as a kind of hobby."

"Wonderful," I repeated once more. "It sounds almost too good to be true. Let me write a donation to the humane society. It's what my mother would have wanted, I know." I pondered the proper amount. A hundred dollars seemed not enough for the magnitude of the service. I pictured the waves of cats, gathered like gray sheaves into cages set out in the dawn's dewy light and harvested at twilight. Even two hundred seemed modest. I wrote a check for two hundred and fifty, which came to about six dollars a cat. The amount startled her, I could tell by the arch of her plucked and pencilled eyebrows. "And here's my number in Princeton if you ever need it," I said. "Could I have your card, so I can maybe call to check on progress?" I didn't want her, and her offer, to get away.

"Of course, Frank." She had stiffened; she had at last realized that she was a stranger to me—someone simply to use. The card said, "Amy Reidenhauer, Director, Boone Township Humane Society," with the same address as on my mother's note to me. I had cracked the code. I drove back to my farmhouse exhilarated, making the tires squeal on the winding Emmetstown road. It came to me that of all the women in the world I loved Amy Reidenhauer the best.

In the next two days, Max surprised me by being a great help in the packing up. While I stood around in the midst of my inheritance paralyzed by the imagined importance of everything, he made decisions. Keep this, take that. When he and I drove away in the yellow rental truck, we left the rest of the funeral meats in the woods, as a last feast for the cats. "O.K., kitties," I told them as they mewed up at my face. "Now you're on your own."

IN the months to come, as fall activity was renewed in Princeton, I avoided going back. I was afraid of getting sucked in. Everything was handled over the telephone. It was almost eerie, to see society smoothly bring into play its perfected machinery for the transfer of property. My lawyer, another old high-school classmate, arranged for the estate assessment and sent me forms to sign and return. The real-estate agent kept me apprised of prospects and offers. When I asked him if he, on his latest showing of the house, had noticed any cats around the back porch, he pretended to search his memory before saying, "Why, no!" Their mewing, furry, hungry substance had vanished like the matter of a dream. My mother's meagre treasures—the rose-pattern china, the pine corner cupboard, the curly-maple sewing table, two lace tablecloths, some turquoise jewelry from my parents' one trip to the Southwest, and a brass tiger stamped on the bottom "Made in China" and forever marked by my childhood impressions of hugeness and menace, though it was scarcely six inches long—found their niches in our home or our daughter's, with a few pieces promised to Max when and if he ever settled down. Little Peter wanted the wind chimes. Josie inherited her yellow plastic dog dish. In Pennsylvania, the auction crew came into the house, cleaned it out of every tattered piece of furniture and antique junk, including the *Life* magazines from V-E and V-J Days, and in late October sent me a respectable check for the proceeds at auction. In early November, the realtor had found a retired couple from Philadelphia whose bid was in the bottom end of my asking range, and who promised to keep renting the fields to Adam and Dwight. The buyers vowed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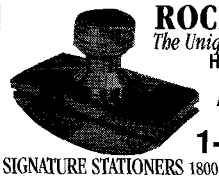
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they had no intention of developing the acreage but refused to sign a covenant without a sharp reduction in the price. I backed down. The farm could take its chances. We set the date of the signing for the Monday after Thanksgiving.

I felt guilty, selling the place. My mother had believed it to be a piece of lost Eden and wanted me to live on it for my own good. Pathetically, she would argue that I could still teach at Princeton, with a readjustment of my schedule that would bunch my teaching into a few days in the middle of the week. "What about my wife?" I asked.

"Tell Andrea," she said, "that I've never felt right, as a woman, off this place. There's magic in the soil, I do believe it. Two days away, and I used to get the most terrible cramps."

"My kids, Mother. They've been raised New York suburban."

This was before Nancy had married and Max dropped out of Dartmouth. "It's not too late to fix that," my mother said. "When they were smaller they used to love it here."

I sighed, and we dropped the subject, knowing that I was the problem. I was the one to whom the farm meant crabgrass and poison ivy, and bushwhacking that would be invisible the next summer, and indoor plumbing that was forty years out of date, and a pack of asthma-inducing cats at the back door.

I didn't call Amy Reidenhauer for weeks, and when I did she sounded vague. "I know he went out and looked the situation over," she said.

"But did he trap any?"

"He has the traps right now in his other truck, I think he told me. Anyway, he didn't see any cats."

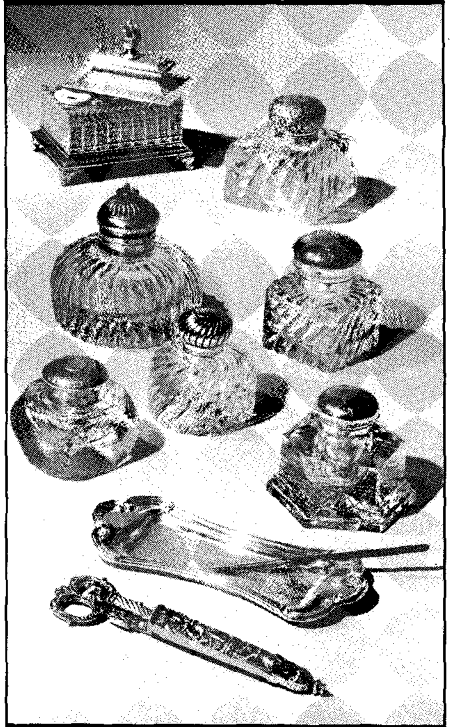
"None? What time of day was he there?"

"I guess around their dinnertime," she said, with an audible smile in her voice. I saw her clearly, her pale lips half open on her moist teeth, sitting at her tidy desk in Emmetstown, with the wild ducks on the wall and the door leading back to the concrete-floored cages—a genie I had conjured but could not quite control, through some little glitch in interstate communications.

"I'd be happy to drive over," I told her, "but I don't see how it would do any good."

"No, Frank," she said sadly, as to a former lover. "I don't either."

Yet the persisting fact of the cats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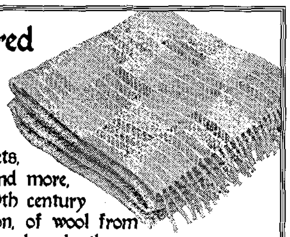

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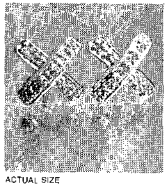
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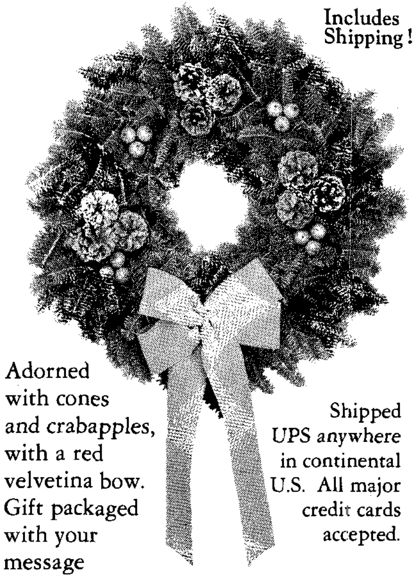

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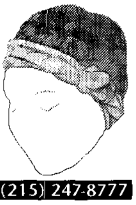

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gnawed at me; at night I would wake up, with my mother's ghost wavering in the room, over where Andrea had dropped her white bathrobe on the back of a chair, and want to scream, in shame and helplessness. The runny-eyed kittens, staggering with hunger. Why had they been called into life? My mother, with more courage than I had, used to drown them, pressing one bucket down into another bucket half-filled with water and their peeping cries. My mother's humming returned to me, marking waltz time with the handle's rhythmic chunking noise, and with it came the whole sweet-and-sour aroma of the kitchen, the way she had shaped it with her life, all those mornings of rising alone, making coffee and pouring cereal, and ceremoniously feeding the cats, while the mantel clock sounded its gulping gong.

One morning, before I was really awake, Amy, taking pity, called me. "Well, he's been busy," she told me. "He must have brought two or three in every evening now for nearly two weeks. But, as he says, the others get more and more wary, so it may be a case of diminishing returns."

"Still, that's terrific progress. I'm *very* grateful. At that rate there can't be too many left."

"That's right," she said, "and the young ones you can count on dying of natural causes, especially now that we're having frosts."

I couldn't quite bring myself to say that I was grateful for that, too.

At the beginning of hunting season, Dwight called and told me he and Adam had posted my land. Did I mind? He knew, of course, that one of my mother's eccentricities was to leave her land unposted, to the annoyance of her neighbors. "They just want the shooting for themselves," she had explained to me. "Especially they don't want the Philadelphia blacks coming out here and finding any land to hunt on. One year, when I still had legs under me, I walked around and tore Dwight's signs down myself. No Hunting, except for him—it made me see red."

"No," I said. "I don't mind."

"I'm glad to hear it, Frank," Dwight said. "If I see any of those cats still around, I promise they won't live to tell the tale. Hunting season doesn't bode well for cats. Hunters see them as competition."

The last days of owning the farm were strange. It was as if I had a phantom limb; I could feel it move, but not see it. The papers were being signed the first day of December, and I thought I should go over the day before, check out the house and barn for any last remnants of our years there, and spend the night in a Reading motel. Thinking there might be a little last-minute brush-clearing or dirty lifting, I hung my suit in the car and put on a wool-lined olive-drab jacket, from an Army-surplus store, that my father used to wear on weekends, and that my mother inherited and would wear in winter, with not too bad a fit. I hadn't had the heart to leave it for the auctioneers to clear away. I put on the jacket and threw a pair of loppers and work gloves in the car.

But by the time I got away from my wife and my students, and made my way around Philadelphia, not many hours of daylight were left. The place when I pulled in was still—still as a picture. Green was gone from everything but the pines and the two holly trees, the male and the female. The orchard grass was an even slope of tan striped with shade. The woods beyond stood tall and silvery, the stalks of darkness between the trunks thickening in the four-o'clock light.

When I slammed the car door, it echoed off the barn wall in a way I had forgotten. When we first moved here, I used to stand in the yard and shout, marvelling at the echo, like the voice of a brother I didn't have.

The absence of an owner showed in a dozen little ways. I had paid a boy to keep the lawn mowed, but he had lazily left tousled fringes along the edges, and where the black walnut had dropped its pulpy shells on the lawn hadn't bothered to mow at all. I put on the coat and carried the loppers, though I doubted I would find much to do—perhaps just check the fragile weeping cherry tree for fallen branches, and cut some raspberry canes out of the hosta beds my mother had planted when we moved. As I drifted across the lank grass, a few shadows filtered out of the orchard and flickered toward the house, eagerly loping. Several more materialized from the direction of the woods. The cats had survived. They thought I was my mother and good times had returned. ♦

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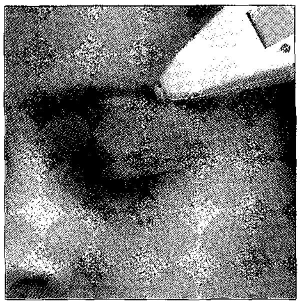

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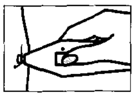

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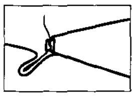

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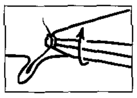

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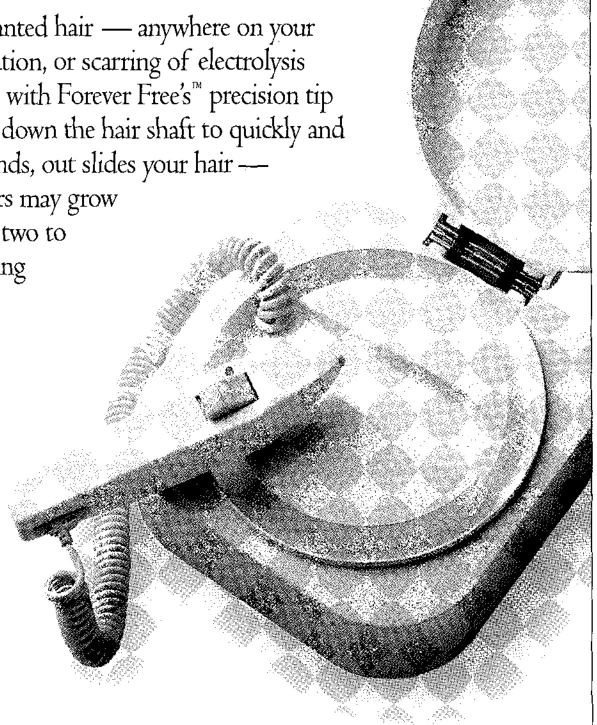

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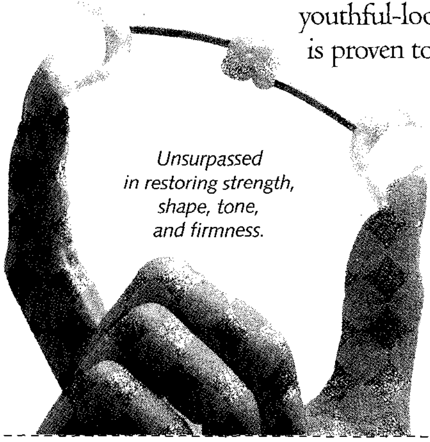

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SEX AND REASON

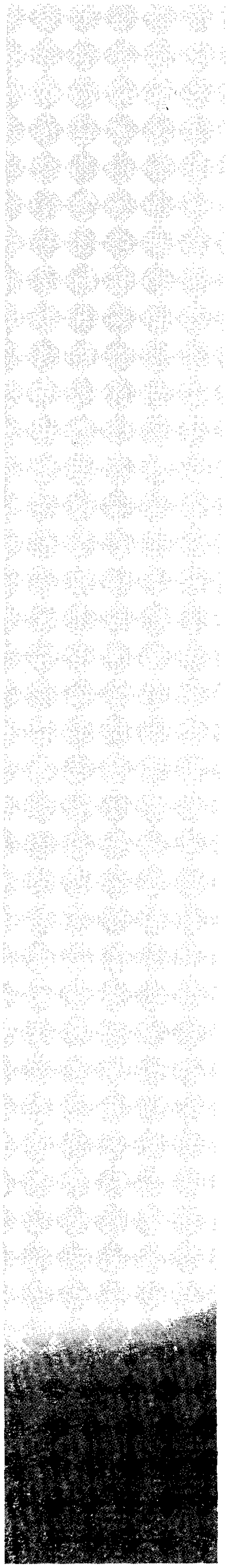
Bertrand Russell, passionate about both.

BY CLIVE JAMES

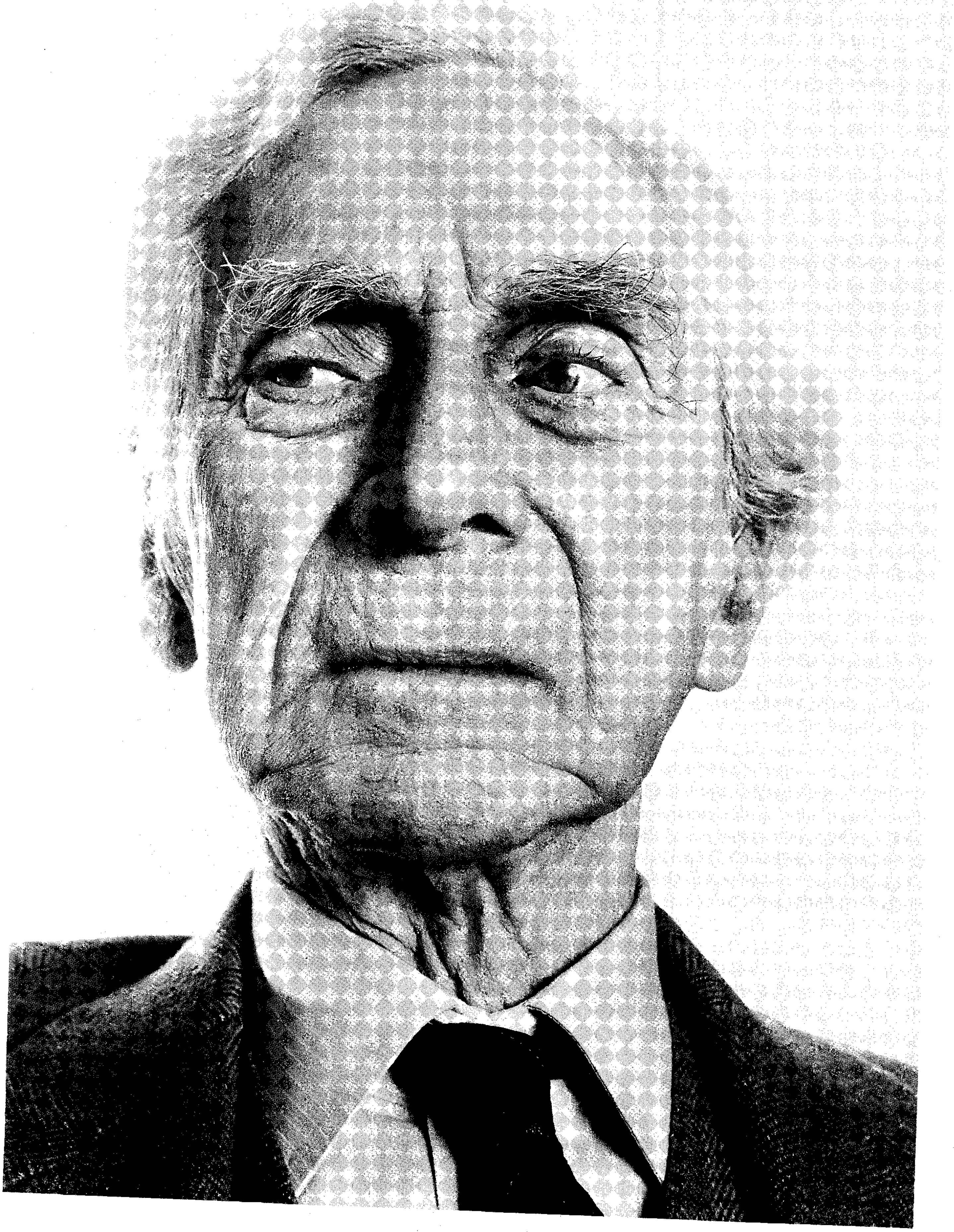
TWO twentieth-century philosophers whose names are inseparable, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Bertrand Russell were such a great double act that there simply has to be a buddy movie sooner or later. At last, the material is all set to be licked into a script. Ray Monk has now matched his justly lauded biography of Wittgenstein with a fat and equally enthralling first volume wrapping up the earlier half of Bertrand Russell's long life—"Bertrand Russell: The Spirit of Solitude 1872-1921" (Free Press; $35)—and is sitting on the hottest Hollywood prospect since Paul Newman and Robert Redford signed on for "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid." Every A-list male star will want to play Wittgenstein—the philosopher who blew away all the other philosophers, including Russell—so, although Lyle Lovett looks the part and Arnie has the accent, Tom Cruise will probably get the job, armed with a Tatlin-tower lopsided bouffant coiffure personally teased out by the great José. ("Mmm! You look like *beeg theenker* now!") Nobody bankable—not even Steve Martin, a philosophy wonk who can actually explicate "Principia Mathematica" while wearing a plastic arrow through his head—will want to play the physically unappealing Russell, so the way should be clear for the perfect choice: Gene Wilder. Fluctuating uncontrollably between idealism and disillusion, forever persuaded that sexual fulfillment is at hand in the form of a luscious girl in a red dress, Wilder's persona, like his appearance, exactly fits a part that should revive his career. The only strike against Wilder is that even he has a bit too much gravitas for the role. On the evidence of Monk's book, Russell, for all his clipped speech and pipe-sucking air of cerebral precision, was a zany, a pantaloon, a fourth Stooge. Monk does his best to lend Russell dignity and stature, but that's the way it comes out, like a fanfare from a whoopee cushion.

It took Russell a long time to get to here. While he was alive, he was a sage. Even in his last phase, when he recklessly allowed himself to be set up as the star turn in various World Peace tent shows that had little to do with any known world and nothing to do with peace, he was regarded as, at worst, a supermind whose bonnet had been unaccountably penetrated by fashionable bees. In his early life, he was universally assumed to be a genius. For all most of us know, he was. Most of us, when we give our opinion on such subjects as analytical philosophy and symbolic logic, are only grazing, the way we are with relativity theory, quantum mechanics, and how a mobile telephone works: the best we can hope to do is talk a good game, backed by the consensus of those who really know. Ray Monk, who really knows, says that the young Bertrand Russell's brilliantly original thinking in mathematics and symbolic logic laid the foundations of analytical philosophy and helped open up the field of theory which made our modern computerized world possible. Glad to take all this on trust, I will add it to the store of dinner-table science talk by which I contrive to maintain some kind of communication with my microbiologist daughter.

The difference between me and the microbiologists, of course, is that they know what they're talking about, whereas I know only how to talk. It is a



PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON
Bertrand Russell, Wales, January 25, 1963.



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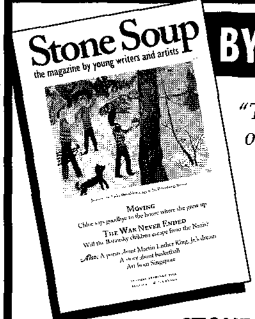

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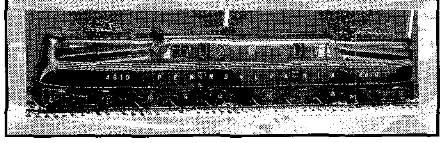

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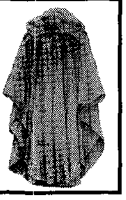

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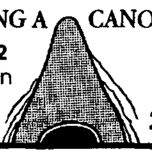

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difference basic to the life of the mind in our time—a time that can usefully be thought of as going back to Goethe, who didn't like Newton's theories about color. Goethe had good humanist reasons for his dislike but didn't have the math to back them up. Science was already off on its own; there were already two cultures. It could be said—it should be said, in my view—that only one of these, the unscientific one, is really a culture, since the mark of culture is to accumulate quality, whereas science merely advances knowledge. But my view is part of the unscientific culture, and has no weight in the scientific one, which settles its questions within itself, marshalling evidence powerful enough to flatten cities and bore holes in steel with drills of light. If Russell the philosopher had been content to keep his philosophy sounding scientific, his reputation would have remained unassailable, even though, or perhaps because, its published basis was unintelligible. There would never have been any way for the lay critic to get at him.

But, to give Russell his due, he was reluctant to confine his philosophical writings to the safely abstruse. Like most of the great philosophers before him—and unlike many of his successors—he strove to instruct the general reading public in ordinary language. Commendably, and sometimes heroically, he sought the most transparent possible exposition of his ideas, thereby proselytizing for the scientific, critical spirit that would liberate mankind from its perennial irrationality and offer the only hope for reforming a cruel world. Reason was Russell's religion: he believed in it passionately. The question now is not whether this is a self-contradictory position—surely it isn't, unless passion becomes zeal—but whether Russell was equipped by nature to promote it. The evidence provided by this book overwhelmingly suggests that he wasn't. His natural use of language was hopelessly in thrall to high-flown, overdecorated rhetoric. When he wrote passionately, he wrote dreadfully, and he could eschew the ornate only by leaving the passion out. Much of his workaday prose was plain to a fault. The principles he promoted in his voluminous writings on human affairs were unexceptionable—it would be better if people were persuaded by facts instead of myths, loved each other, and sought peace—but the language in which he set them down defeats memory. His heart wasn't in it, even if his mind was. His professional philosophy, the hard stuff, all sprang, we are told and must accept, from his conviction that our complex knowledge of the world could be analyzed down to its ultimately simple conceptual foundations. But his popular philosophy, the easy stuff that you and I are meant to understand, all too clearly proves that a prose bereft of nuances leaves out the texture of real life. Qualities that Russell entirely lacked were the stylistic density and precision of a writer capable of judging common life in the light of his own most intimate failures and defeats—the density and precision by which a great writer clarifies complexity without simplifying it and intensifies the clarity into incandescence. The last thing Russell could write from was personal experience.

BY Monk's account, it isn't any wonder. Russell's personal experience was awful, first of all for himself and later on, crucially, for the women he was involved with. Paradoxically surrounded by the complete apparatus of wealth and comfort, his childhood was all bereavement. In what must have seemed a conspiracy to leave him alone, his parents and everyone else he might have loved departed prematurely, stricken by diphtheria and other then incurable diseases with no respect for rank: in adult life, he would say that he always felt he was a ghost. Nowadays, armed with the knowledge distilled into John Bowlby's great trilogy "Attachment and Loss," those interested in such things would be able to identify Russell's situation as a casebook example of detachment: undermined from the start by childhood separations of such violent intensity, the victim's relationships in adult life tend to be more controlling than coöperative and much more eloquent than felt. Russell filled the bill to what would be hilarious effect if you could forget that the women who made the mistake of getting involved with him were real, and really suffered. Russell could forget it, but then he had the advantage of having never fully realized it in the first place. In matters of emotion, he was an almost perfect solipsist: a woman could exist for him not as a separate personality but only as an extension of his own personality. Like conscientious objection, free love was a cause he was ready to suffer for; but the freedom was all for him, and the suffering, it turned out, was all for those he loved.

The pattern was set from the start, when he wooed and won Alys Pearsall Smith as his first wife. Russell, a suitor not to be denied, or even interrupted, talked for hours and covered square miles of paper explaining to her that the great thing about marriage would be sex. Alys, by her own admission, distrusted the whole idea, proclaiming for women in general and for herself in particular what Russell described as "an aversion to sexual intercourse and a shrinking from it only to be overcome by the desire for children." Undaunted, the budding ratiocinative genius pursued the courtship with a heat from him that increased with every glint of ice from her. He attempted to persuade her that sex would be the ideal *spiritual* expression of their mutual love. When, in a rare moment of abandon, she allowed him to kiss her glacial breasts, he soared into the stratosphere of prose, declaring in a letter to her that the event was "far and away the most spiritual thing there has yet been in my life." Russell then attempted to convince her that, once the knot had been tied, the proper approach to conjugal bliss would be a plenitude of indulgence, thus to tame in his otherwise elevated soul the disruptive element of testicular agitation. Using the Quakerish "thee" and "thou" familiar form with which the two betrothed conspired to elevate their discourse to the empyrean plane, Russell declared:

> It would be a good plan, for me at any rate, to indulge physical feelings a good deal *quite* at first till they no longer have that maddening excitement to the imagination which they now have. I lie in bed and they come before my mind and my heart beats wildly and I begin to breathe heavily and sometimes I tremble with excitement—I feel *almost* sure that when once all the physical feelings have been indulged, this intense and almost painful excitement will subside, and whatever is pure and good and spiritual in them will survive.

The poor schmuck had blue balls, but it would have been a better gag

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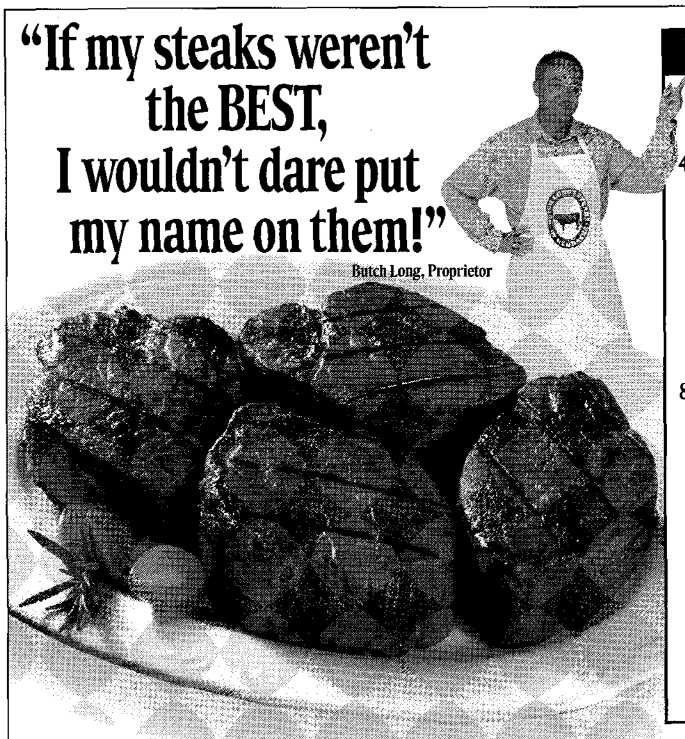

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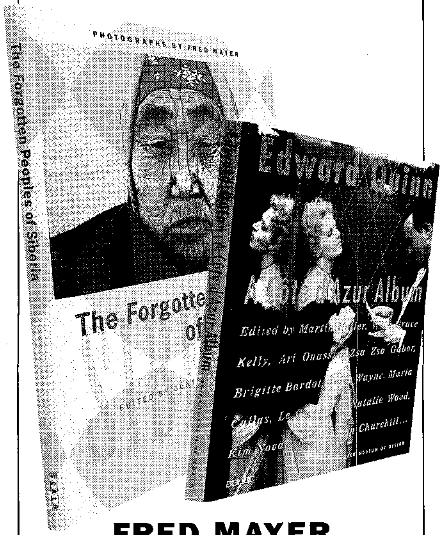
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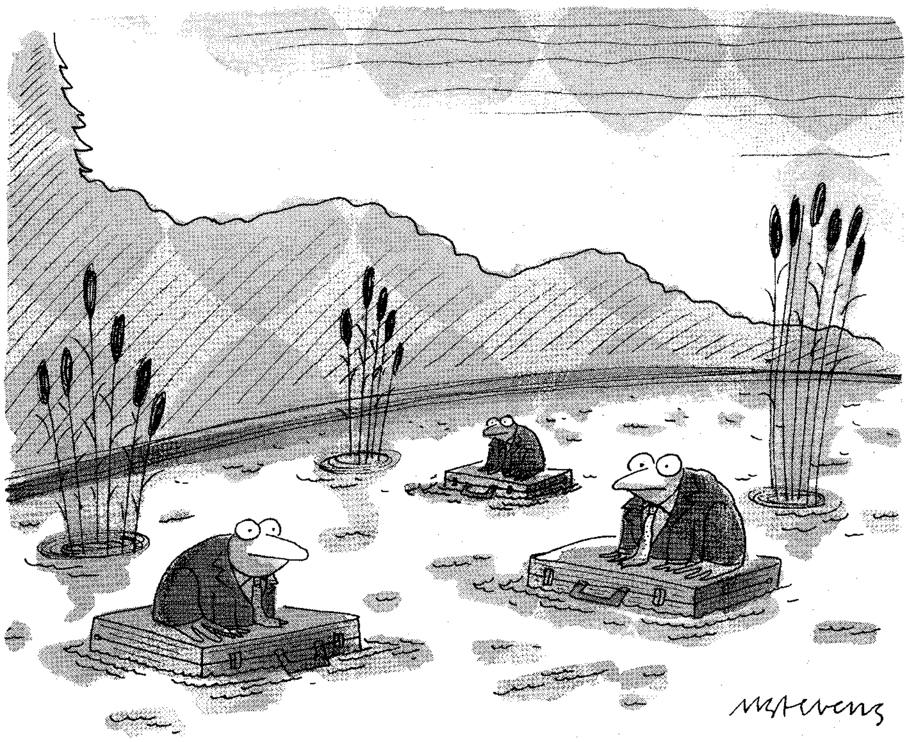
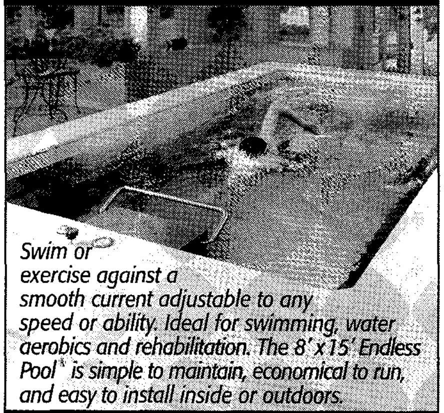
if he had been fooling only himself. Unfortunately, he was also fooling her, and one feels for her even at this range. Dynastically, the alliance of a British aristocratic scholar and a well-connected American bluestocking looked good on deckle-edged paper. In fact, it was hell, and the partner who suffered its most acute torments was Alys, although Russell, typically, managed to convince himself that *he* was the patsy. Having cajoled her ruthlessly into a cryogenic marriage, he felt within his rights not only to fall for her sexier sister, Mary, during a Continental holiday but to tell Alys all about it: "I am trying to fall in love with her and make these last days pass, and I think I shall succeed enough to avoid too much impatience—she's a fearful flatterer."

Sharing a sitting room in a Paris hotel, Russell and Mary read Nietzsche together by day and wallowed in Wagner by night. Probably they weren't having full sex, because Russell would never have been able to withhold the glad tidings from Alys, thee can bet thy life. He certainly told her about his and Mary's tender good-night kisses after midnight discussions about the Zeitgeist. "Why should I mind thee kissing [Mary]?" Alys told him. "Cried most of the morning," she told her diary. She cried most of the rest of her life. The immediate cause of their estrangement, six years later, was Russell's unrequited but spectacular passion for Alfred North Whitehead's wife, Evelyn—a permanently convalescent beauty whose spiritual reluctance to put out was matched by an earthy willingness to soak up Russell's money in the form of gifts, trips, and other freebies. Alys had a closeup of the proceedings, because the Russells, fulfilling all the requirements of Strindbergian claustrophobia, were sharing a house in Grandchester with the Whiteheads, where Evelyn faithfully reported to Alys everything Russell was saying—a possibility that failed to occur to Russell even while Evelyn was faithfully reporting to him everything Alys was saying. As Russell's last embers of feeling for Alys chilled to gray, he wrote her a letter that can be said to epitomize his ability to analyze his own emotions:

> Dearest, thee does give me more happiness than I can say—all the happiness I have, in fact. Thee is the only person I know well and yet really and thoroughly admire. I love the absolute certainty that all thy thoughts will be magnanimous and free from all pettiness. Since last winter I have known that life without thee would not be possible.

The writing was on the wall—though backward, like Leonardo's. Life without her became possible two months later. His renowned account





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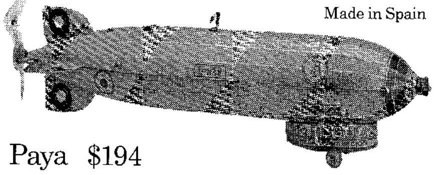

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of how he got the idea in a flash, as enshrined in his ostensibly frank but deeply self-serving three-volume "Autobiography" (1967-69)—"I went out bicycling one afternoon, and suddenly, as I was riding along a country road, I realized that I no longer loved Alys"—turns out to have more truth in it than you might think: there really was a bicycle. But there was no suddenly about it; he was merely bringing to a head what had been festering for years. As Alys went from being miscast to being cast off, she began a slow, limping exit to the wings of the drama, there to await in vain her cue for reentry, with death a longed-for but elusive alternative. (She despaired when a lump in her breast turned out *not* to be cancer.) She always hoped that he would come back to her. He must have had something.

MOSTLY, he had a brain, and the ladies went for it, even when they didn't think much of his body. Lady Ottoline Morrell was grandly married but sported an impressive track record of adulterous bunk-ups with *prominenti* of all stamps. Anyone but the great philosopher would have spotted that this was a good reason not to try to get her all to himself. But Russell was so bowled over by an actual, consummated, thrashingly carnal love affair that he went ape. He counselled her to tell her husband, Philip, so as to avoid "deceit and sordidness." Typically, Russell had misread the object of his adoration completely. Ottoline, who, unbeknownst to Russell, was still pursuing long-term affairs with Henry Lamb and Roger Fry, liked her life. She was loyal to her complacent husband. She was a realist. Russell, even though the warm impact of Ottoline's physicality had made him uncertain that he could now maintain contact with the cool world of mathematical logic, was, in emotional matters, still and forever an idealist. For once, the result was less Strindberg than Shaw, with the philosopher Russell spouting high-flown balderdash and the layperson Ottoline talking all the sense. His "morality of passion," he explained to her, demanded the ability "to behave as one might in a grand opera or in epic poetry," and he went on to vaporize about how "rapturous it would be to

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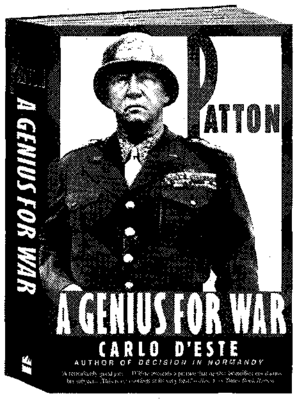

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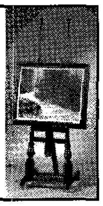

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die together like the people in Rosmersholm." Sensibly planning to die in her comfortable bed like people in real life, Ottoline became more sparing with her favors. "His intellect is supreme, but he lives up there so much that all the rest of him seems to have lost motion," she told her journal. "I feel it exhausting, as I have to keep in step with his intellect all the time, and also satisfy his heart." Russell's intellect was at that time keeping in step with that of his dazzling new discovery, Wittgenstein, so he perhaps found it hard to slow down the pace. Satisfying his heart was not easy, either: satisfaction bred hunger.

When Russell was lecturing in America in his forty-third year, he fell for Helen Dudley, a Bryn Mawr graduate and would-be poet in her late twenties. She was glad to go to bed with him, and Russell responded to that gesture by offering her his hand in marriage, convincing himself that he was doing so *principally* because of his *high* esteem for her writing. He was not yet divorced from Alys. Nor was his love affair with Ottoline exactly over, though he filled her in on the news in the confident expectation that she would understand. "My darling," he wrote, "please do not think that this means *any* lessening of my love to you, and I do not see why it should affect our relations."

Ottoline understood, all right. When he got back to England, she refused to see him. When that stratagem failed to reignite his ardor, she saw him and threw him one. This time, she surprised him—and, presumably, herself—by manifesting an unprecedented physical desire. The delighted Russell immediately forgot all about his commitments to Helen. "I am less fond of H.D. than I have tried to persuade myself that I was," he told Ottoline. "Her affection for me has made me do my utmost to respond. This has brought with it an overestimate of her writing." Though Helen was about to set sail for England as had been arranged, she was clearly on her way to the wings. As war approached in Europe, Russell commendably sympathized with a generation's suffering, which he guessed to be forthcoming. But as Helen approached from America his sympathy for her evaporated.

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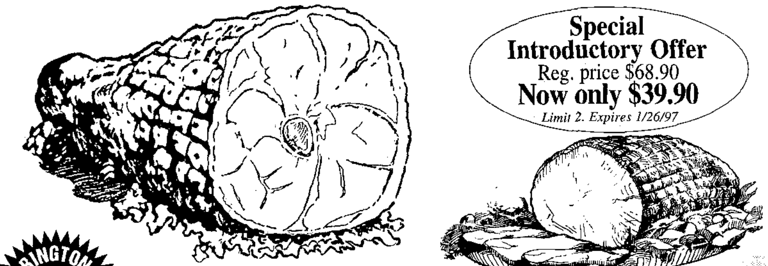
Monk tellingly notes that Russell could think in terms of abstract populations but not of concrete individuals, unless the individual was himself. He knew he was a ghost, but he couldn't see how that fact might help explain why ordinary people were ciphers to him. In particular, he believed that females, as a sex, suffered from "triviality of the soul": they didn't see the big picture, as he did. Helen, with her awkward insistence on arriving as requested, obviously had a bad case of it. "I feel now an absolute blank indifference to her," he told Ottoline, "except as one little atom of the mass of humanity." When Helen arrived in England with suitcases full of pretty clothes she fondly imagined to be her trousseau, he refused to see her.

Blind to the possible consequences, Russell contrived that the desperate Helen should take refuge in the household of none other than Ottoline Morrell. Helen told Ottoline everything and showed her Russell's letters, which the appalled Ottoline discovered to be full of the same exalted flapdoodle that had once been lavished on her. She found Helen's trousseau more tasteless than pathetic, but she had enough heart to be devastated by the revelations of Russell's pettiness and the capacity of his smarm to spread straight from the refrigerator, like margarine. Unimpressed by his reassurances that his "sense of oneness" with her had only increased, Ottoline cooled to him. Soon Russell transferred his affections to Irene Cooper-Willis, with Ottoline playing the go-between. (This is "The School for Scandal" updated by Tom Stoppard. Don't try to figure it out now; just enjoy the flash and filigree as the principals rocket in and out of the parlor.) Irene, a celibate but bewitching young beauty, was ready to be Russell's research assistant but not his mistress. The affair aborted on the pad, but there was enough flame and smoke to bring Ottoline back at full speed. Into the cot with him she duly dived, for one last paradisiacal thrash, inspiring Russell to the whitest heat of his epistolary style:

> My Heart, my Life, how can I ever tell you the amazing unspeakable glory of you tonight? You were utterly, absolutely of the stars—& yet of the Eternal Earth too—so



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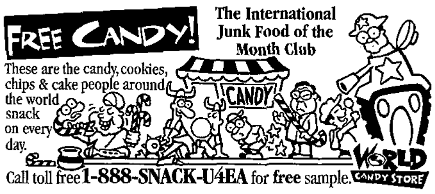

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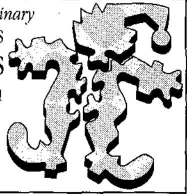

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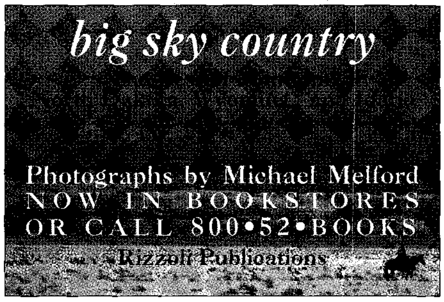

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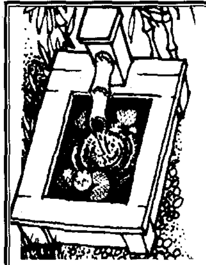

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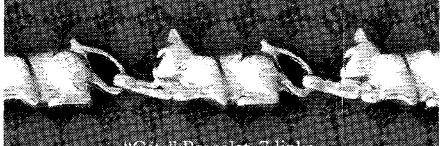

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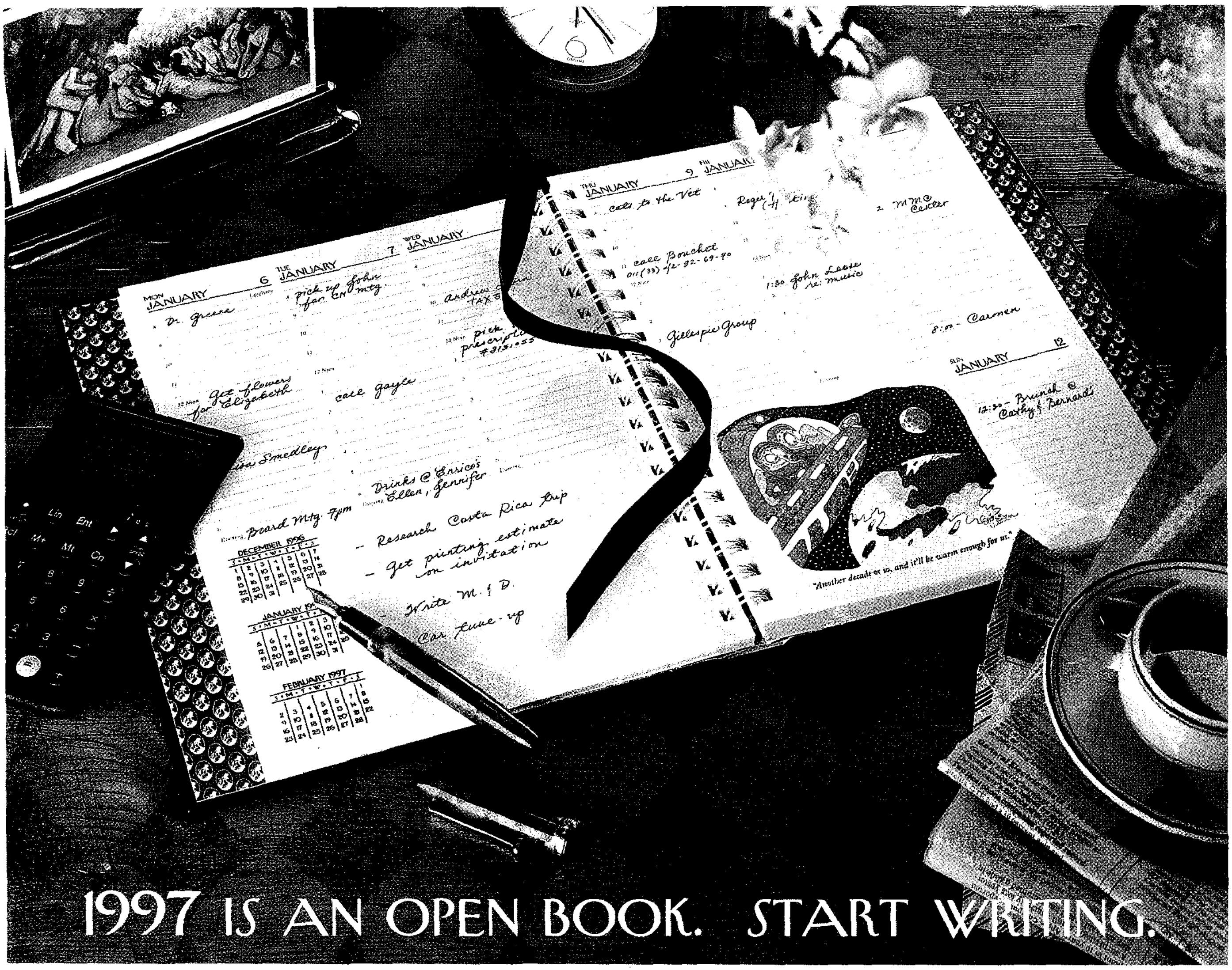
> that you took me from Earth & in a moment carried me to the highest heights . . . it blended in some unimaginable way with religion & the central fires . . . the mountains & the storm & the danger, & the wild sudden beauty, & the free winds of heaven . . . the depths & wildness & vastness of my love to you . . . a flood, a torrent, an ocean . . . what the greatest music yearns for, what made the Sunflower be weary of time, what makes one's life a striving & straining & struggling after Heaven.

Striving and straining and struggling for a single halfway original phrase, he sent such letters day after day, like the artillery barrages then lighting up the Western Front. Everyone writes badly to a lover, but for specifying Russell's kind of badness—an interstellar bathos ready to gush at the touch of a button—there are no words in English, although there is possibly one in German: *Mumpitz*, meaning the higher twaddle. But not even his prose was enough to turn Ottoline off altogether. As people would later say in California, she was always there for him: there to be informed of his latest depredations, incomprehensions, and marvels of self-deceit. On the basis of extensive research, Monk is reluctant to lay the blame for the madness of T. S. Eliot's wife Vivien on Russell's treatment of her during their affair, but it could scarcely have helped. For this reader, however, the prize episode of the book is Russell's deep, intimate misunderstanding of the divinely beautiful twenty-one-year-old actress Colette Malleson, who should have been one of the great loves of his life. No doubt he believed she was, to judge from his prose. "I want to take you into the very centre of my being," he wrote in 1916, "and to reach myself into the centre of yours." Russell said goodbye to Ottoline all over again and invited Colette, who was already married to the actor Miles Malleson, to the peaks of spiritual union: "I love you, & my spirit calls out to you to come & seek the mountain tops." But the mountaintops, it transpired, held no place for her aspirations to the stage: it wasn't a worthy ambition for any companion of his, and he did his eloquent best to talk her out of it. Luckily, she had the strength to read him the news about the necessity of her staying true to her gift, but you can't help wondering why he needed to hear it instead of figuring it out for himself. Why was the philosopher always the most blatant dunderhead on the scene?

The best that can be said for him in this instance is that he was concerned about the sexual temptation that Colette's vocation might put in her way. He was right to be: a handsome young director won her affections. That development threw Russell into such paroxysms of jealousy that her husband, a natural philosopher who was clearly better qualified in emotional matters than the professional, very generously worried about Russell's fate more than about Colette's. Russell resorted to composing a long, mordant analysis of Colette's allegedly deficient character, emphasizing her vanity and her inordinate need of sexual adventure. Whether or not this was projection, no term except damnable effrontery can cover the fact that he sent the character study to Colette. She stuck to her guns and went on seeing other men, thereby spurring Russell to a rare statement identifiable as normal human speech: "You said the other day that you didn't know how to repulse people, but you always knew how to repulse me."

Luckily for him, there was yet another young knockout on the scene—the twenty-five-year-old Dora Black, armed with a first-class degree in Modern Languages from Girton and an all-embracing hero-worship for Russell, whom she found "enchantingly ugly." She was the girl in the red dress. Truly desired, Russell responded as might be expected, cranking up his prose style into transgalactic overdrive even as she strove to hold him earthbound with her encircling arms. Colette did an Ottoline, returning to his bed to fill it when it was empty of Dora. Russell, who lied to each of them about the other and told Ottoline the truth about both, was at long last getting all the affection he could take. At this point, any male middle-aged non-philosopher who has become absorbed in Russell's emotional career to the point where the man's requirements have started to seem normal will find it hard to suppress an exhortation from the sideline: Hang in there, don't muck this up, you're doing better than Errol Flynn. But not even Russell could flourish forever in an atmosphere of total unreality. Along with the stars, the storm, the highest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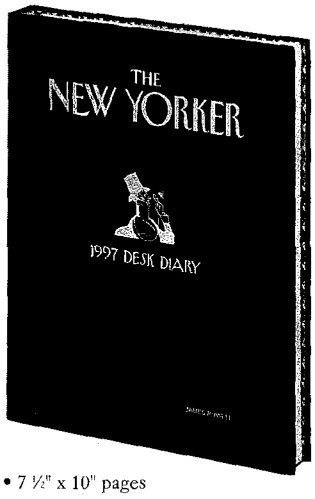
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heights, and the central fires, he wanted children. Dora was ready to give them to him. He ends the book married to her, and we close it with something like relief, as if after watching an unusually obtuse chimp navigate its way through a maze all the way to the bunch of bananas.

NONE of this, I believe, is a travesty either of Russell's love life or of Monk's account of it: Russell's love life *was* a travesty. The same is true for many men, and perhaps most: sooner or later, sex will make a fool out of any of us, and we are never more likely to talk balls than when they rule our brains. But most of us have not set ourselves up to instruct the world concerning what it should think and feel. Russell did. Fortunately for his memory, there is a parallel tale to be told, and Monk tells it well. All the generosity and forbearance that Russell so conspicuously did not bring to his emotional life he brought to his intellectual one, and there his true magnanimity is to be sought and found. When he learned that his work on the logical foundations of mathematics had been anticipated by the German scholar Gottlob Frege, he was generous to Frege instead of spiteful, and did everything he could to confirm the primacy of Frege's work over his own. Not even Wittgenstein, who shared Russell's proclivity for telling the brutal truth, was able to arouse his enmity. Russell, who arranged for the publication of the "Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus," and promoted Wittgenstein's career in all respects, had every right to regard the astounding young Austrian as his protégé, but the protégé felt no obligation to protect his mentor's feelings; quite the reverse. Wittgenstein was worse than blunt in undermining Russell's confidence in his own achievement as a professional philosopher, and unrelenting in his contempt for everything Russell did as a popular one. When their friendship was broken off, however, it was at Wittgenstein's instigation, not Russell's. This showed true greatness of soul on Russell's part. It must have been a blow to discover that Wittgenstein did not share his conviction that a scientific philosophy was possible, but worse than a blow—a death threat—to be told that he was a bad writer.

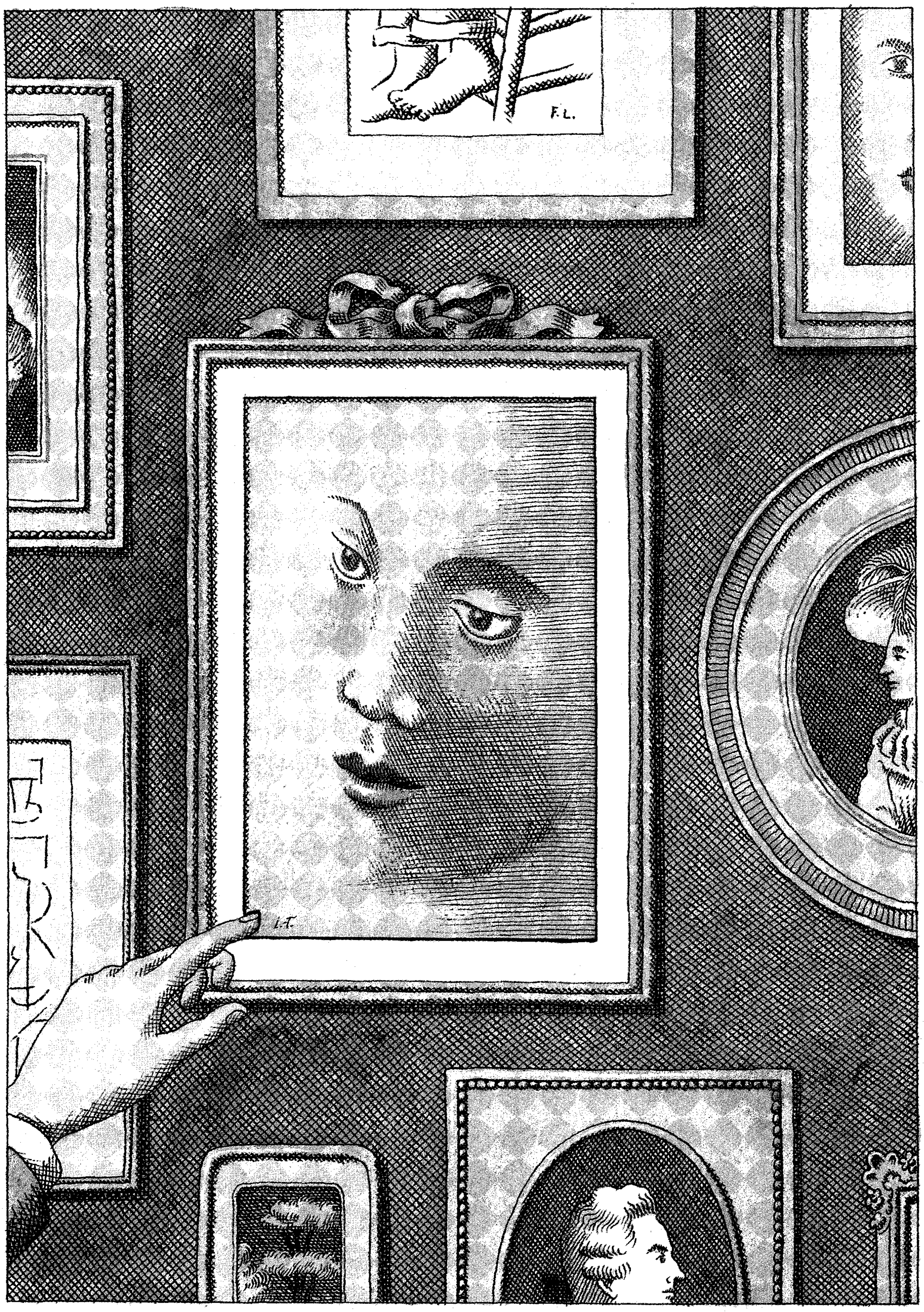
Wittgenstein's qualifications for saying so were impeccable, because he himself was a very good writer indeed. He can be seen as one of the jewels in the glittering German aphoristic tradition that began with Goethe and Lichtenberg and included, in Wittgenstein's own time, Arthur Schnitzler, Karl Kraus, and Alfred Polgar. Even in English translation, the habitually terse Wittgenstein inexorably emerged as the artist-philosopher that Russell, inspired originally by the poetic element in Spinoza, had vainly dreamed of being. But Wittgenstein, though a born master of language, was determined not to be seduced by it. Russell was seduced by it every day of his life. Wittgenstein set limitations on philosophy: "What we cannot speak of we should pass over in silence." Russell recognized no such limitations, and there was nothing he could pass over in silence. He gushed even when he turned off the faucet. Talking about ordinary life instead of the heady realm of love, he could leave out the stars, the mountaintops, and everything else in the instant-mysticism kit, but his plain language still took off under its own power, clear as crystal and no more yielding, as convinced of its elevated reasonableness as it was unconvincing about the stubbornly unreasonable texture of real life.

There are exceptions, and one of them is likely to remain a great book. "A History of Western Philosophy," which was published in 1946 and is still the first general book for the layman to read on the subject, shows what Russell's plain prose could do when the subject was safely in the past and some of his earlier exaltation of pure reason was in the past, too. However abstruse the topic, every sentence is as natural as a breath: for more than eight hundred closely printed pages, the exposition flows without a hitch. "Whatever can be known," he says in its concluding pages, "can be known by means of science; but things which are legitimately matters of feeling lie outside its province." Even this is open to question (there are very few important truths about politics, for example, that can be known by any means except a combination of science *and* feeling), yet at least it shows signs of the old man's having momentarily attained a measure of negative capability. Unfortunately, the bulk of his popular philosophizing was about current events, and was written, even into his old age, with all the overconfident flow of his initial, natural assumption, which was that political and social unreason was most easily to be explained by the mass of humanity's not being as bright as he was. A conviction of his superiority to mere mortals was part of his nature: we know that—know that now better than we ever did—because he was always inviting his latest love to join him on the heights above them.

THERE is a lot to be worried about in the current vogue for biographies of the great. To find out in advance that Picasso was a monster could be an invitation to underestimate his art, and to wolf down the details of Einstein's infidelity is certainly easier on the nerves and the ego than trying just once more to imagine those lights on the moving trains. Monk must have been aware of the dangers: after all, Russell behaved no worse than Einstein, better than Picasso, and a lot better than Matisse. But surely Monk has done the right thing in making Russell's personal life so prominent. Like the creatively fecund but personally unspeakable Brecht, Russell was a great man who used his prestige to back up his political opinions, and when someone does that we want to find out how he treated the people he knew, so as to assess the validity of his exhortations to the millions of people he didn't

FAMILIAR FACE

Pierre Le-Tan made his début in this magazine at the Capote-precocious age of nineteen, contributing the first of eighteen covers. The son of a Vietnamese painter, Le-Pho, and a Frenchwoman, Le-Tan has since exhibited his work widely, and on December 12th the Paul Kasmin Gallery, in SoHo, will open a show of approximately sixty of Le-Tan's recent drawings. The exhibit falls into two groups: architectural street scenes, depicting forlorn thoroughfares in such cities as Paris and Tangier; and surreal portraits (see "The Exhibition," at right). All are drawn in cross-hatching style over a watercolor ground and set off by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century gold-leaf frames.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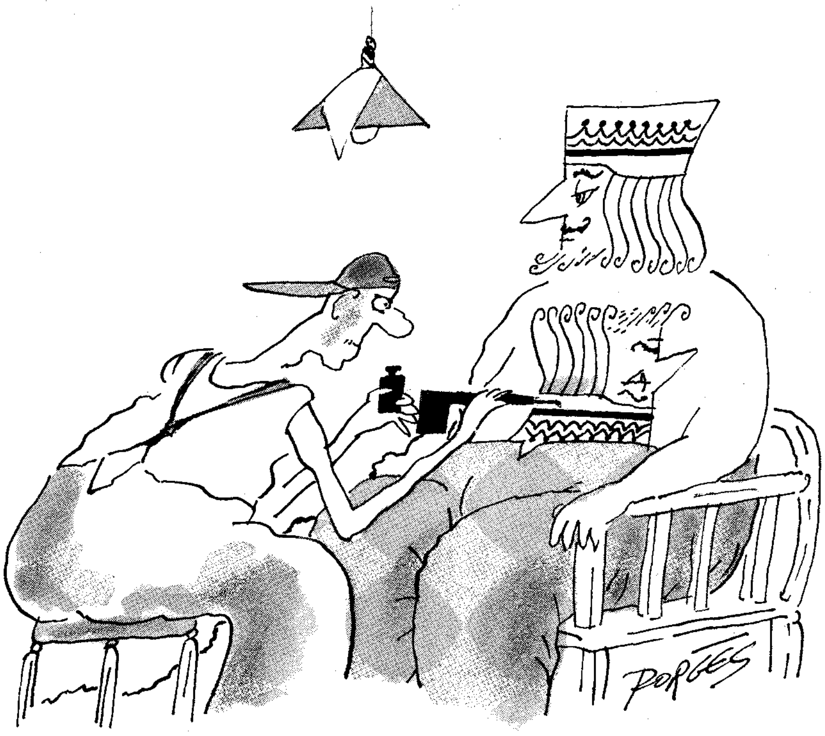

know. The unsung hero of this volume is D. H. Lawrence, who put his finger on what Monk bravely calls the central conflict of Russell's nature—or, rather, put his finger painfully *into* it, because it was a wound. Lawrence pointed out the irreconcilable discrepancy between Russell's ideal of universal love and his alienation from humanity. The devastated Russell generously declined to withdraw his lasting admiration of Lawrence, but one can't help feeling that this might have been partly because he didn't see all the implications of what Lawrence had said. As the autobiography reveals over and over, Russell could come to know things about himself after he was told often enough, but somehow he still couldn't take them in. He was in this respect the opposite of an artist, since the mark of the artist is to take in more than he can know.

It shouldn't have mattered, but in the long run it did. While Russell had no objections to colonialist wars against "primitive" peoples (in his view, such wars spread enlightenment), he deplored wars between civilized nations. Unremarkable at first blush, this stand required courage in the war fever of 1914. Having consecrated his vows with a stretch in prison, Russell unwisely went on to pursue pacifism as part of his religion of reason. He erected peace into a principle instead of just espousing it as a desirable state of affairs: if enough people believed in peace, there would be no more war. The principle started looking shaky when Hitler came to power and set about incarnating the intractable truth that unless absolutely everyone believes in peace the few who don't will subjugate all the others. Einstein, a clear candidate for subjugation, gave up his pacifism straight away: he didn't have to be a physicist to figure it out. But Russell the philosopher was slow to get the point. And, even when he did, the principle was never given up. It was there waiting to lead him on to his biggest absurdity: unilateral nuclear disarmament.

To an issue that he might have helped clarify he added nothing but confusion. While there was a good case to be made for multilateral nuclear disarmament, there was none at all to be made for unilateral nuclear disarmament, since it depended on presenting a moral example to a regime that was, by its own insistence, not open to moral persuasion. Russell knew this: he had been one of the first visitors to the Soviet Union to warn against what was going on there, and when the Americans were still the only possessors of the atomic bomb he had recommended threatening the Soviets with it in order to change their ways. He knew it, but somehow he had not taken it in. I myself, as a multilateralist who did my share of marching from Aldermaston in the early sixties, well remember the hard-line-unilateralist Committee of 100 and its adherents: talking to them about modern history was like talking to a Seventh-Day Adventist about Elvis Presley. They were fatuous, but with the support lent them by Russell's immense prestige they could believe that they had been granted a vision of a higher truth, beyond the sordid realities of politics. The eventual effect, transmitted through the left wing of the Labour Party, helped to keep the Conservatives in power for a generation, because the public was unable to believe that Labour could be trusted with the deterrent—a distrust that proved well founded when Michael Foot, during his doomed general-election campaign, bizarrely promised to keep the deterrent for only as long as it took to bargain it away.

Russell spoke and thought as if the mass of humanity needed convincing that war was a bad thing. Somehow, he never quite took in the fact that most people already knew this but were genuinely divided as to what should be done about it, and something he never took in at all was that there is no such thing as the mass of humanity—there are only individuals. Failing to grasp that, he was, for all his real sympathy with the sufferings of mankind, paradoxically orating from the same rostrum as the century's worst tyrants. Trying to wake us all up, he could never believe that we were not asleep; that our nightmares were happening in daylight; and that his religion of reason could do little to dispel them. How could he not realize it? In this courageously frank first volume of what could well amount to a classic study of the personality of genius, Ray Monk shows us how—by showing us that no matter how brilliant a mind may be, its stupidity will still break through, if that is what it takes to assuage its solitude. With his eyes on the heights, Russell never noticed that his trousers were around his ankles: but now we know. Take it away, Gene. ◆

* * *

"The whole event is to break down bridges that have existed between the three [students, staff and faculty]," said Multicultural Center Program Advocate Dee Eason. —*Oregon Daily Emerald.*

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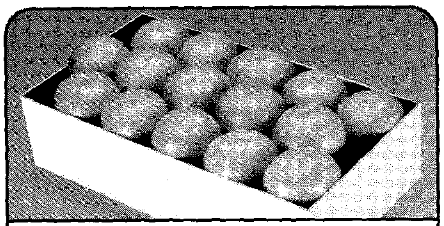

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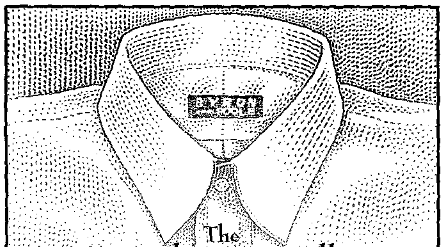

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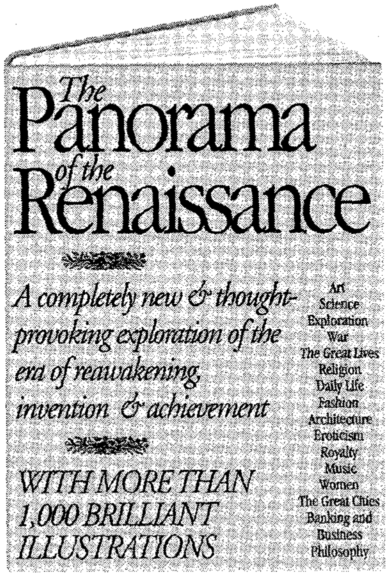

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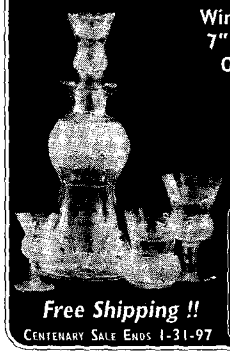

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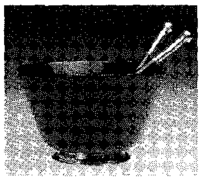

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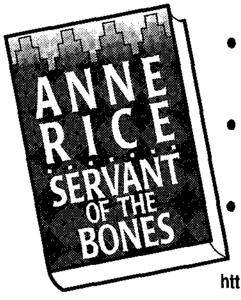

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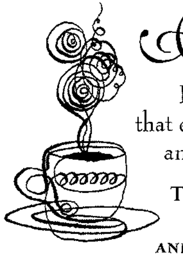

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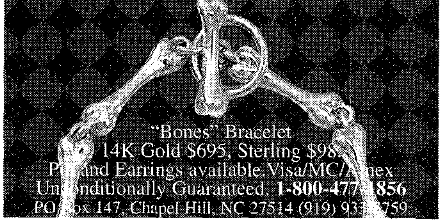

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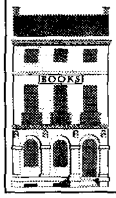

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BRIEFLY NOTED

INDEPENDENT SPIRIT: ESSAYS, by Hubert Butler (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $35). The first American appearance of an Irish essayist whose forthrightness, responsiveness, and sanity have won him a European reputation. Butler (1900-91) was born and died in Kilkenny, but he lived all over Europe and travelled outside it in the years between. His writing restores to history the bumps and rough patches—the realities—that get ironed out of textbooks. So Butler describes groups (like his own, the Anglo-Irish) or individuals (like Mr. Leo Pfeffer, the magistrate who investigated the assassination of Francis Ferdinand in Sarajevo, in 1914) who are nowadays either forgotten or misfiled. Though often righteous—one essay recalls 1938-39 in Vienna, where he worked with Quakers helping Jews escape the Nazis—he's never smug, and in controversy he is assured, not rancorous. His knowledge of languages and literatures was extensive (he translated Chekhov for his brother-in-law the director Tyrone Guthrie), and his critical essays invariably grasp an author's essence. There's not a wasted word in this book.

WORLDLY GOODS: A NEW HISTORY OF THE RENAISSANCE, by Lisa Jardine (Talese/Doubleday; $32.50). A report on the upper reaches of a consumer society during a period when opportunities for eye-popping display increased with every decade. Jardine's lively book is specific and down-to-earth, quoting prices for altarpieces and spices as if the reader were shopping and planning to buy. A particularly fascinating section recalls how books suddenly ceased to be principally collector's items or aids to scholars and became the sixteenth century's Internet, dispensing fact and fancy to high and low.

FERMAT'S LAST THEOREM, by Amir D. Aczel (Four Walls Eight Windows; $18). This is a mathematical bonbon of a book. It briefly chronicles the history of the famous problem of the title, which was recently solved by a mathematician named Andrew Wiles after he had devoted seven years to the task. From time to time, Aczel uses phrases like "the jacobian of a curve defined by a congruence subgroup," but that should not deter you: he does a superb job of creating in the nonmathematical reader the illusion of comprehension.

CAUGHT INSIDE: A SURFER'S YEAR ON THE CALIFORNIA COAST, by Daniel Duane (North Point; $21). Out of a young teacher's compulsion to be on an "honest-to-God surfboard, on a daily basis" has come a wry, lyrical ode to a sport that in the author's view has been misunderstood as a pastime for dropouts. Duane digs up surprising literature on the subject, ranging from Captain Cook to Mark Twain, and he is as alive to the quirkiness of his surfing buddies as he is to the mating habits of otters, the insides of a shark's stomach, and the insidious allure of the Big Wave.

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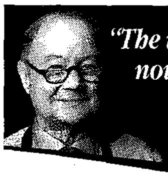

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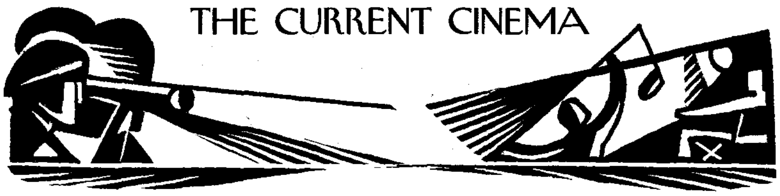


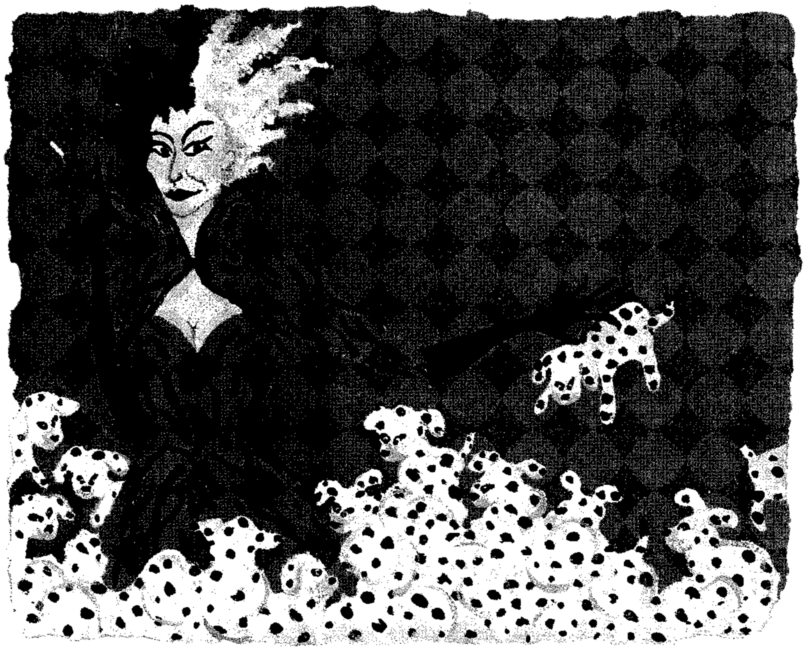
THE CURRENT CINEMA

STARLIGHT BARKING

Under the tree: "101 Dalmatians" and "Star Trek," rewrapped.

BY ANTHONY LANE

THE first wave of Christmas movies is upon us, and the combined effect of them is to make you wish it were February. The studios seem to believe that, given the captive nature of the juvenile audience at this time of year—cold weather, warm movie theatres, the semester on its last legs—they can offer a product of outstanding laziness and still clean up. It doesn't even have to be new; they can simply dig out an old movie and roll it in fresh wrapping. That, as far as I can gather, is the idea behind Disney's "101 Dalmatians," which was written by John Hughes and directed by Stephen Herek, although it doesn't actually move in any direction whatsoever.



Glenn Close as Cruella, the iconic villain, and now the owner of a fashion house.

The plot will be familiar to those who remember the animated version of 1961, or the original Dodie Smith novel. Roger (Jeff Daniels) and Anita (Joely Richardson) are brought together by their respective Dalmatians, Pongo and Perdy. The humans marry, settle down together in London, and brace themselves for the advent of puppies. Fifteen arrive, only to be kidnapped by Cruella DeVil (Glenn Close), who is a kind of crossbreed between Diana Vreeland and Indira Gandhi. Aided by her henchmen, Jasper (Hugh Laurie) and Horace (Mark Williams), Cruella has amassed ninety-nine puppies in all, and intends to make a coat from their skins. It is this ambition, of course, that gives the tale its sting; Disney villains are invariably ten times as interesting as the puffballs of virtue who oppose them, but, to a young viewer, the method of Cruella's madness is the coldest shock imaginable. You are introduced first to a bunch of cute animals and then to someone who wishes not only to kill them but to strip them clean of everything that made them cute in the first place. Pongo and Perdy are called upon to save the day, and they come through with courage, but, in retrospect, you see that

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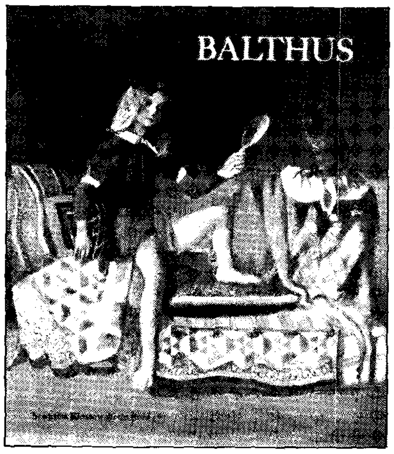

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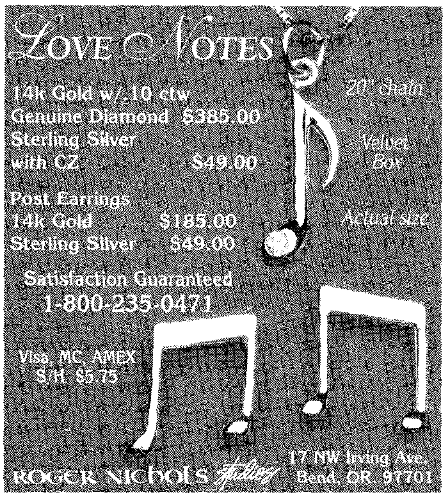

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it was really a job for Clarice Starling.

The story's neat arrangement of charm and fright was all present and correct for its first incarnation, in 1961, and the question that everybody asks about the remake is: Why bother? Why not do the decent—and cheaper—thing, and reissue the cartoon? Disney would argue that substantial changes have been made: for one thing, animation has been replaced by live action, although why this should be considered an improvement is hard to grasp. The dogs no longer talk; anyone who goes along to Herek's film expecting a canine "Babe" will be shattered with disappointment, since the Dalmatians are required to do little except tip their heads to one side in an orthodox display of pooch intelligence. I found myself missing the elegant voice-over that opened the earlier version, in which Pongo discoursed on the bachelor existence of his master—so acutely, indeed, that you were led to wonder who was master of whom. More damaging still is Herek's attempt to dramatize what Dodie Smith so beautifully called the starlight barking—that natural oratorio in which dog howls to dog under a night sky, setting up a chain of communication from a London roof to the Suffolk hideout where the puppies have been imprisoned. The new movie simply makes this confusing, a blur of indecipherable shagginess. Pongo can count himself lucky that he didn't get a message back from Glenn Close's hair.

Disney's marketing has leaned heavily on the Cruella icon, and a couple of early scenes suggest that Close will be allowed to take the role between her teeth as firmly as her cigarette holder. The new film promotes Cruella from Anita's school friend to her employer: DeVil is now a fashion house, and for a while, as Close smirked at Richardson, crooned admiration for her sketches, and urged her never to forsake the thrills of a career for the sake of a mere *man*, I caught a definite aroma of sexual power play. Richardson's lowered eyelashes are so redolent of the demure, pre-paranoid Princess of Wales, Close's lipstick is of such an alarming and predatory scarlet, and Roger is so indisputably a wimp that Herek might as well have ditched the whole mutt motif and concentrated on Cruella's master plan to lure Anita into a fur-lined boudoir and put her on a tight leash. Sadly, it was not to be; from here on, sex never raises its muzzle, and the

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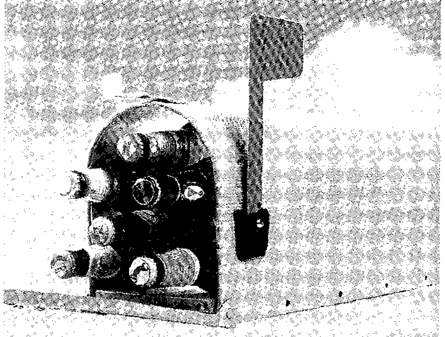

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Cruella-inspired flamboyance quickly oses its glow. Herek is unable to decide, n fact, how stylized his picture should e. He makes occasional vague sallies hrough Tim Burton country—the De-Vil mansion in Suffolk is all frost and uinous rot—but his vision of London s horribly damp and dull. I guess that ould be excused as hyperrealism, but t certainly lowers the spirits, and it's a ong way down from the 1961 movie, vhose spindly, delicate lines and soft olors breathed a faintly Edwardian air nd were almost, but not quite, enough o make you forget that you were watchng a Disney film at all.

The 1996 movie, on the other hand, s Disney Agonistes: blind, unrelentng, tragically shorn of fun. Perhaps we hould be grateful that the cynicism of he entire project, its blatant indifference o the very idea of inspiration, has backired so badly. But I can't help feeling orry for Glenn Close, who must have hought that she was onto a sure thing; he extracts what juice she can from her andful of ripe lines ("I love the smell f near-extinction"), but Herek encourges her to break out in undignified Jack Nicholson cackles, and there is somehing wretched and depressing about seeng a fine actress fly through the air and nd in pig manure. She is also the vicim of skunk jokes and raccoon gags—nusually bad luck, considering that neiher species is native to England. The stink hat rises from John Hughes's screenplay s the same one that wafted through his Home Alone" films: it is the odor of huiliation, of the vengeful conviction that hildren—or, if no kids are available, anials—can best amuse themselves by visng prolonged and superfluous violence pon adults. Obviously, Cruella deserves er comeuppance, but it arrives so clumly, and is attended by so little wit, that doubt whether she would honor it with second's attention. If we mourn her deeat, it is because it signals another crisis the lurid history of Disney—the point t which comic panache is finally chewed p by the powers of crassness. "101 Dalnatians" should be put to sleep.

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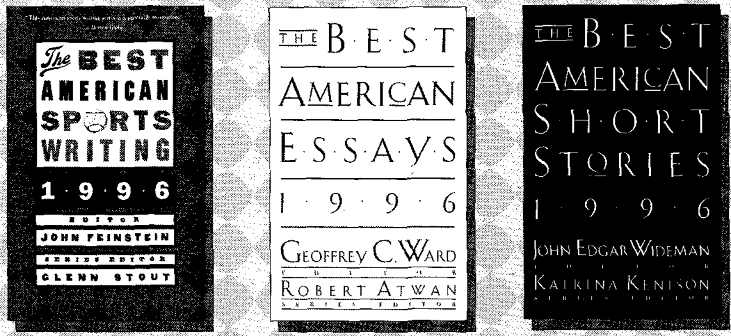
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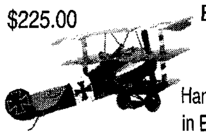

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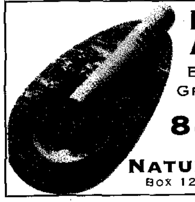

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through "Roseanne IV: The Wrath of Dan" or "ER II: The Search for Doc," so I can't really see the point of "Star Trek: First Contact." It's not a terrible movie, but it's about as substantial as the hologram sequences that the Captain of the Enterprise can summon at will. Still, I was impressed by the care that went into the design of the plot—the way in which it is both ordinary enough to bore the space-pants off a "Star Trek" devotee and abstruse enough to leave more agnostic members of the audience completely baffled. I grew up with the old ship and its trusty crew, and, while I quite understand that it was time to put Kirk and his buddies out to pasture before they succumbed to permanent phaser droop, I find it nearly impossible to get up to speed with Captain Jean-Luc Picard—the name alone makes me laugh every time I hear it—and his state-of-the-art gizmos. "We appear to be caught in a temporal wake!" one of the officers shouted at the beginning, and I thought, Join the club.

The hook of "First Contact"—number eight in the "Star Trek" series, if you can believe it—is that planet Earth is once again threatened with destruction, this time by the Borg. The Borg are the scariest folk in the universe; they are half organic, like supermarket granola; they have forearms left over from the "Terminator" films; and they suffer from troublesome scalp problems, not least a bunch of little hoses sprouting from the backs of their heads. We are told that they have "a collective consciousness," with no concept of individuals, although by that criterion our galaxy would have long ago been conquered by the Partridge Family. The Borg idea of a good day is to wipe out—or "assimilate," as the jargon sensitively puts it—anything that stands in their path. What bugs them about Earth is that in the year 2063 (ancient history, by "Star Trek" standards), human beings make contact with aliens for the first time. Being violently opposed to the intergalactic peace process, the Borg travel back in time to stymie the crucial meeting before it can happen. I have to say, I'm with the Borg a hundred per cent on this one; anything that will allow fans of "Star Trek," let alone of "The X-Files," to turn around to the rest of us and crow "I told you so" is an intrinsically bad idea.

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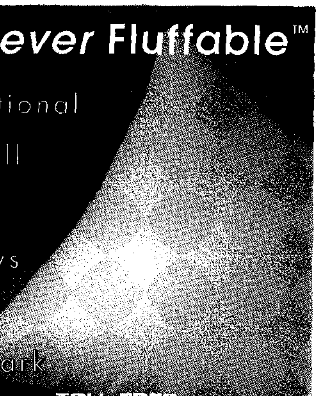

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The film is directed by Jonathan Frakes, who also plays Riker, the most boring of the characters. The casting is something of an embarrassment; the people on the bridge of the Enterprise are no more exciting than their twenty-fourth-century drip-dry knitwear, whereas some of the supporting roles show distinct evidence of intelligent life. James Cromwell plays a rangy rocket nerd who invents the first warp-drive mechanism, in 2063; Alfre Woodard appears as his assistant, who develops a minor sweetness for Captain Picard. Above all, there is the Borg Queen, the *fons et origo* of this ruthless race: you would expect such a figure to bellow her orders, like Tina Turner, but—and this is a lovely conceit—she is a model of feline courtesy. I like to think that she took the trouble to oil herself with the good manners of advanced civilizations before reducing them to rubble. At first, the queen is no more than a disembodied head and shoulders, which float down from the roof as if advertising a cybernetic shampoo. Even then, under all the gnarled tracery of her makeup, I began to recognize that smile, and the voice that poured out from it like cream. As the head clipped onto the body, I got it: this was the helplessly seductive Alice Krige. As Harold Abrahams's actress girlfriend, Krige woke up the somnolent "Chariots of Fire," but somehow the full-blooded parts that should have followed never arrived. You might call it a shame that she has been reduced to playing semi-metallic androids in Christmas sci-fi; I prefer to think that the lasting joy of ephemeral movies, the saving grace of crummy genres, is their bemusing ability to toss up great cameos and to flare with snap intensity. "First Contact" is drab and halting, and oddly glum to look at, but when Krige is onscreen, glistening with wickedness and bathing Picard's brains with her Joan Greenwood whisper, the movie beams itself up to a more rarefied level. It was frankly a disappointment that she and her fellow-Borg had to get it in the neck, but that's not the end of the affair. I came out of the eighth "Star Trek" already pondering the ninth, in which Jean-Luc *et ses amis* take on the angriest force ever to menace our existence: if you thought the Borg were bad, just wait till you meet the McEnroe. ♦

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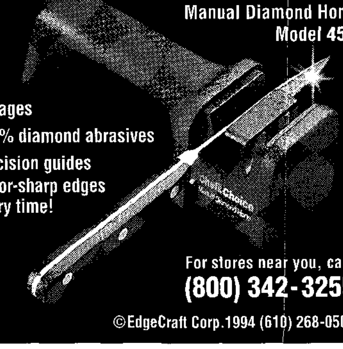

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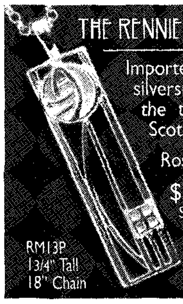
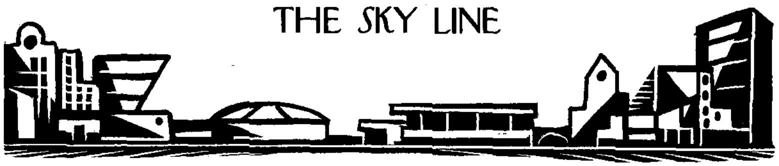


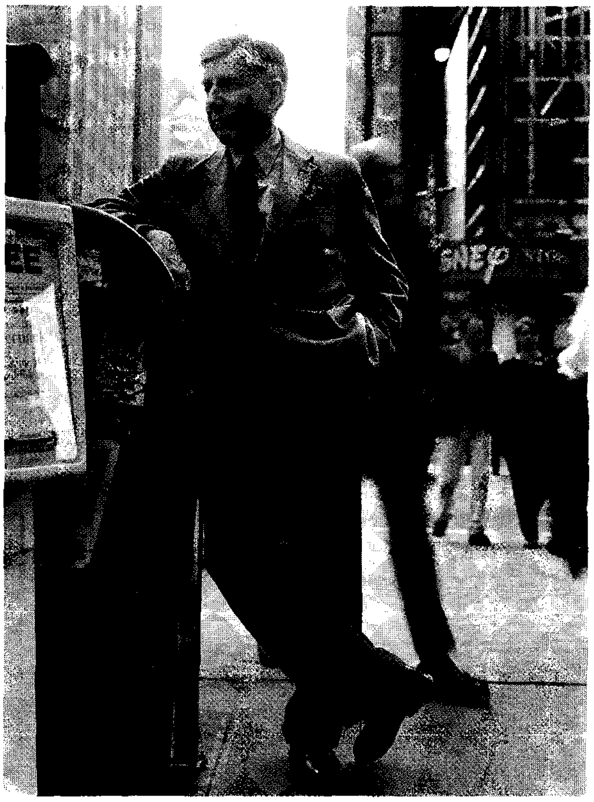


THE ONE-MAN CITY

Hugh Hardy: the latter-day Stanford White.

BY BRENDAN GILL

THE architect Hugh Hardy shares with an earlier luminary in the profession, Stanford White, an enviable advantage. According to contemporary accounts of White's activities, it was simply out of the question for anyone to say no to him, and, as far as I can tell, very few people have ever said no to Hardy. When they have done so, they have usually lived to change their minds. At the moment, Hardy plays a role in the practice of architecture in New York City much like the role that White played from the eighteen-eighties until his death, in 1906. Over a period of some twenty headlong years, White designed a number of local buildings intended for an astonishing variety of purposes and executed in an astonishing variety of styles. Among the buildings still standing and safely attributable to White (rather than to his partner McKim) are the old Tiffany Building, on Fifth Avenue at Thirty-seventh Street; the I.R.T. powerhouse at Fifty-ninth Street between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues; several buildings on the uptown campus of N.Y.U., in the Bronx (now Bronx Community College); Judson Memorial Church and the Washington Memorial Arch, both on Washington Square; and the Cable office building, on the northwest corner of Broadway and Houston Street. In his day, White was the club designer par excellence: from his hand came the Metropolitan Club, the Century Association, the Lambs Club, the Harmonie Club, the original Colony Club, and the Players, all of which remain in use. Several of his private residences have been converted into apartments or embassies or used for other purposes; among the best of them are the Villard Houses, the Joseph Pulitzer house, and the J. Hamilton Robb house. Of White buildings long since destroyed, the most to be regretted are the original Madison Square Garden, the Knickerbocker Trust Company Building, the *Herald* building, the Charles L. Tiffany residence, and the Madison Square Presbyterian Church, which many critics consider his masterpiece, and which, built to last a thousand years, lasted but thirteen, being pulled down to make



An eye for the theatrical: Hardy in Times Square. Photograph by Dana Lixenberg.

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room for an addition to the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company Building.

To my knowledge, only Hugh Hardy in our time can match so broad a spectrum of work, carried out in so brief a period. In the past five or six years alone, he and his firm—Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates, founded in 1967—have designed, with Hardy as the partner in charge, the newly expanded headquarters and studio building of Dance Theatre of Harlem; the restoration of the Rainbow Room; the Bryant Park Grill and kiosks; the Joyce Theatre; the Arthur and Janet Ross Lecture Hall, at the New York Botanical Garden; the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Majestic Theatre; the corporate headquarters of Scholastic, Inc.; and a new setting for Windows on the World, the restaurant at the top of the World Trade Center. The total reconstruction and restoration of the New Victory Theatre, on West Forty-second Street, was completed last year. Hardy is currently presiding over a similar but much more complex reconstruction and restoration of the New Amsterdam Theatre, across the street from the New Victory, which will be completed in a few months. A renovation and redesign of the Vivian Beaumont Theatre, at Lincoln Center, has just been completed, and a new apartment house on East Seventy-sixth Street, east of the Church of St. Jean Baptiste, will be finished next spring.

Leaving aside commissions that Hardy and his firm have been busy with elsewhere in the country (Las Vegas, Harrisburg, Hawaii, Los Angeles, Omaha, Palo Alto, and so on), a local project characteristic of the firm in design and in the degree of patience required to bring it about is Bridgemarket, a shop-and-restaurant-and-food-market complex to be built under the great arches of the Manhattan approaches to the Queensboro Bridge. The project has been "in the office" since the late eighties and recently threaded its way through the labyrinth of requirements fashioned by community groups and city departments. It is one of the most exotic sites in the city—the vast vaulted interiors were designed by the Catalan engineer and architect Rafael Guastavino in 1909 and were constructed out of his famous self-supporting fireproof tiles. When Hardy is asked how he feels about the delays to be endured before he sees his

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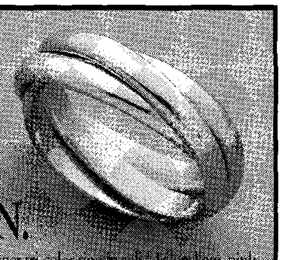

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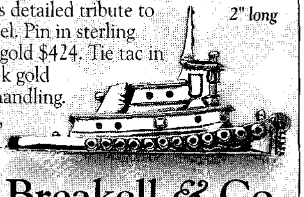

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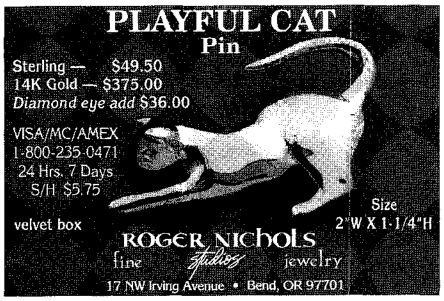
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designs realized, he looks back on his involvement in the redesign of Bryant Park, and says, with his customary cheerfulness, “It took ten years.”

WHITE and Hardy may be said to have achieved their professional reputations by dint of exceptional charm and energy—the matter of their talent having been accepted at the beginning of their careers as something more or less beyond challenge. As White had, Hardy has gifted partners at his elbow and a large, hardworking firm to back him up, but one tends to think of both men as individuals, distinguished by an inborn, unteachable knack of pleasingness. It is an attribute that sets them apart in a fashion no doubt irritating to their rivals and yet is not to be successfully argued with: what we crudely call personality is more nearly indispensable to the profession of architecture than to any other. There are dourly taciturn lawyers and doctors who contrive to prosper, but an architect must have some hint of the ingratiating salesman about him, however well disguised by good manners. Not until the time arrives for the drawing up of contracts—and later, perhaps, when prizes are awarded for a completed project—does an architectural firm receive deserved attention in the press. Both Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer and White's firm of McKim, Mead & White have earned a considerable place in the history of American architecture, but fame always favors a face over a fact, and a good-looking face at that. Hardy, who is over six feet tall, as White was, has a ruddy complexion, blue eyes, and a prominent nose, and as he approaches sixty-five his spiky dark hair is turning gray. But, as White did, he remains inveterately boyish in demeanor and inexhaustible at work or play. Hardy carries out many projects simultaneously and attends many parties, but if it should be necessary for him to leave one prematurely he does so civilly, by stealth. We do not see him go; we miss him after he has gone.

WW
MENS
HAIR

BUFFON'S epigram “Style is the man himself” strikes me as being more nearly true of architecture than of any of its sister arts, and in the case of both White and Hardy their charm is readily discernible throughout their work. A lighthearted playfulness, rare among architects (Frank Lloyd Wright had it, and so did Wright's English contemporary Edwin Lutyens), accompanies the increase in their practice and their rise to fame. They remain fresh to life and to aesthetic risk-taking. Though architectural historians are reluctant to say so, I am convinced that buildings, simply as bricks and mortar, and without regard to their purposes, are capable of making us happy—even of giving us, on a higher level of intensity, joy. Acting on this hypothesis, I declare White's Madison Square Garden (demolished in 1925 to make room for yet another insurance-company building) to have been the most joyous structure ever built in New York.

On any list of the joyous buildings that Hugh Hardy has designed, the snug, barnlike Glimmerglass opera house, in Cooperstown, must appear near the top. (In the novels of James Fenimore Cooper, what we call Lake Otsego is known as Glimmerglass.) The opera house rises a short distance from the lake, in what Hardy describes as an Arcadian setting. No doubt a restaurant that he is designing for a hillside overlooking the opera house and the lake will share its joyousness, and so will a Hardy-designed street fair that is currently under construction in Las Vegas: a fanciful replica of the San Gennaro festival in Manhattan's Little Italy. Among his local buildings I would award twin palms to the Dance Theatre of Harlem, on 152nd Street between Amsterdam and St. Nicholas Avenues, completed in its present form in 1993, and to the New Victory Theatre, the first of the battered old theatres on Forty-second Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues to be fully rehabilitated.

Founded by Arthur Mitchell in 1968, Dance Theatre began its existence in a garage, and in 1971 Hardy, with a small budget, undertook to remodel the garage into studios. Several years later, he carried out a major reconstruction of the earlier reconstruction—the kind of adventure that most architects tend to shy away from—and created in a neighborhood much in need of visual encouragement a building that describes an exuberant arc against the sky, with sidewalls of brick in an ancient geometric African pattern, and a façade of shining glass brick and black-and-white tiles, bearing across its surface a slash of bright-yellow metal. It's a structure that, inside and out, seems to raise a gallant cry of affirmative protest against the burden of life as it has long been lived in that neighborhood.

The New Victory, a plump little turn-of-the-century theatre, has a castlelike Graustarkian façade and an interior with a steeply raked orchestra floor and two tiers of balconies embracing the stage. The interior decoration has a confectionery air that puts one in mind of Viennese operettas that nobody living has ever heard and that, on second thought, may well be entirely imaginary—products not of a resurrectable past but of Hardy's invincible desire to please. The New Victory is devoted to children's-theatre productions, and that fact bears witness to a reversal of fortune unprecedented, as far as I know, in the cultural history of New York. Only a few years ago, the block on Forty-second Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues was filled almost entirely with hard-core-porn movie theatres and sex shops, and the New Victory was among the theatres so employed. Few people—and I was among them—believed that after half a century of ever-increasing desolation the block could be transformed by one or another of the proposals that our city planners put forward, including the construction of several very high and very bulky office skyscrapers on the corners where Seventh Avenue and Broadway meet Forty-second Street. Still less did we believe that the block could be transformed by being helped to regain the prosperity of its long-vanished theatrical past, given that the city has prided itself on never looking back—on erasing all but a handful of traces of the cultural heritage embodied in its architecture. But in Hardy's eyes the seedy, tumbledown structures on West Forty-second Street were well worth salvaging.

A principle that Hardy has championed since he began attending Broadway shows, in his early teens—and one that was much reinforced when, as a young architect, he worked on the plans for the Vivian Beaumont Theatre with its designers, Eero Saarinen and Jo Mielziner—is that a community in which theatre flourishes is in good health, while a community in which theatre languishes is, whether it's aware of it or not, ill. We are a secular society, leery of the sacred, and certainly the last place we would be tempted to look for any manifestation of the sacred is in the neighborhood of Times Square. For Hardy, however, the theatre is an intrinsically sacred activity, as it was for the ancient Greeks. Moreover, an element of the sacred carries over from his handiwork in theatres to his designs for restaurants: the Rainbow Room, the Bryant Park Grill, and the brand-new Windows on the World all provide us with what amounts to a theatrical experience, which is to say that a certain savor of the sacred accompanies the predominant savor of the harmlessly profane.

HARDY rejects the view, common in the profession, that the buildings an architect designs are in some quasi-mystical fashion his children. He sees himself as an agent, not a parent. It is the owners and users of a given building who are the only people fit to judge its success or failure. And this success or failure is to be measured not in aesthetic terms but in terms of how a building feels to live in or work in over many years. Crudely put, the test is a short and simple one. Does a building make its occupants, whether consciously or unconsciously, content to be there? Does it even, perhaps, from time to time bestow upon them a sense of delight? (In one Hardy-designed office, employees are said to be reluctant to leave at the appointed hour.) "Style is the problem solved," the architect Thomas Hastings said, but Hardy isn't concerned with style—with having what we slangily speak of today as a signature. There is no Hardy signature, as in the old days there was no White signature. Many people find it hard to believe that one man could create the bizarre Italianate semi-ruin of the Majestic Theatre at the same time that he was re-creating the suavely Art Deco Rainbow Room, but to Hardy this is a circumstance typical of his entire career. White and his partners were following the same free-as-air procedure when they chose as a motto for their firm "*Vogue la galère!*," which can be translated as "Take a chance!"—or, more colloquially, "What the hell!" It is a motto that Hardy quotes with approval. ◆

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KIM JONG IL, TONITE!

BY BRUCE McCALL

> The North Korean Government declared this year that in addition to his other accomplishments, [Kim Jong Il] is "a great maker of witty remarks." The announcement said those jokes "have equipped the people with the most scientific and revolutionary world outlook." —*The Times*

THEN there is the one, Comrades and Germs, about the commissar of the swine collective and the asbestos miner's daughter. It seems—

Great Prankster, stop right there! You wowed us with this classic howler only last night at the Number Two Locomotive Foundry Anti-Revanchist Smoker. Our sore ribs cannot stand it again!

Assign that man to the potash-recycling brigade! But, seriously, I just flew in from Pyongyang, and—

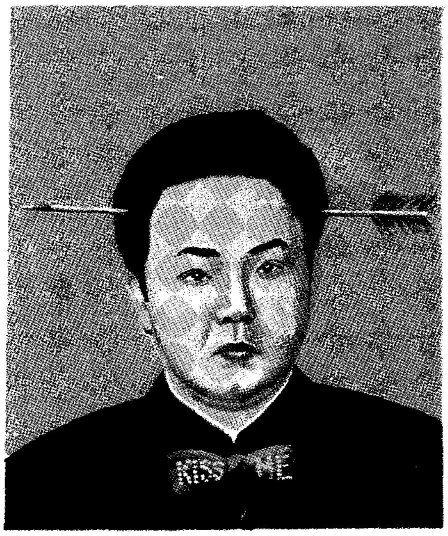
Dear Helmsman of the Laff Flotilla, you crack us up with that one, no matter how often you tell it! We bid you, tell it yet again, for every time you do the spud harvest doubles!

Which reminds me, this duck walks into a concrete-extruding collective, and—

Please, please, Architect of the Opening Monologue Miracle! We are hemorrhaging with glee, even before the punch line! We think again of our Dear Yuckmeister's rat-tat-tat of one-liners at last week's Heroes of the Creosote Distillers Roast. And, within days, what a revolutionary and scientific outlook had those jokes equipped us with! Up in Oryu, girls of the Three-Revolution Red Flag Movement build a cyclotron out of old Hyundai parts; and, Supreme Adept of the Withering Putdown, chemical engineers in Sowan succeed in creating a washday miracle that removes even stubborn grease stains without harming dainty underthings!

But then, surely, Fellow Sunny-Side-of-the-Streeters, you know the difference between a pumpkin and a box of Kleenex?

Indeed, Hardest-Working Divinity in Show Business! For it was only yesterday, at the Fair Play for Mother-in-Law Jokes Rally, that you convulsed—convulsed—two million resolute Young Guards of the Standup-Comedy Cadre with this riddle de-luxe! And what happened? The per-*chongbo* rice yield, through the roof!



May I tell you, Shock Troops of the Shtick Revolution, that there was a rabbi, an Irishman, and a Pole—

Ah! Holder of the Borscht Belt First-Class—what is your genius that we know what you are about to say even before you say it? Late word just in, Clown Prince of the Throwaway Line: the power of your mirth just inspired three scientists—once they finally caught their breath—to come up with the breakthrough idea of tangle-proof flypaper!

Flypaper? A man in restaurant orders soup. Calls over the waiter and says—

Excuse me, Ever-Vigilant Keeper of the Elevator-Inspection Certificates. When you get to the punch line do not be surprised if the gross national product has doubled! You are *that* funny! But, if I may, I would presume to share with Your Esteemship a joke told to me by a member of the visiting Cuban trade delegation. As he tells it, this sailor is shipwrecked on a desert island—

Whoa right there! Shipwrecked? Slandering the Navy of the Democratic People's Republic by mocking its seamanship is a punishable offense!

Forgive me, M.C. of the Peace Oscars, I forgot to say he was merely a sailor of the discredited cruise-ship lounge-comic hyena gang. Stay with me on this one. One day, he is—

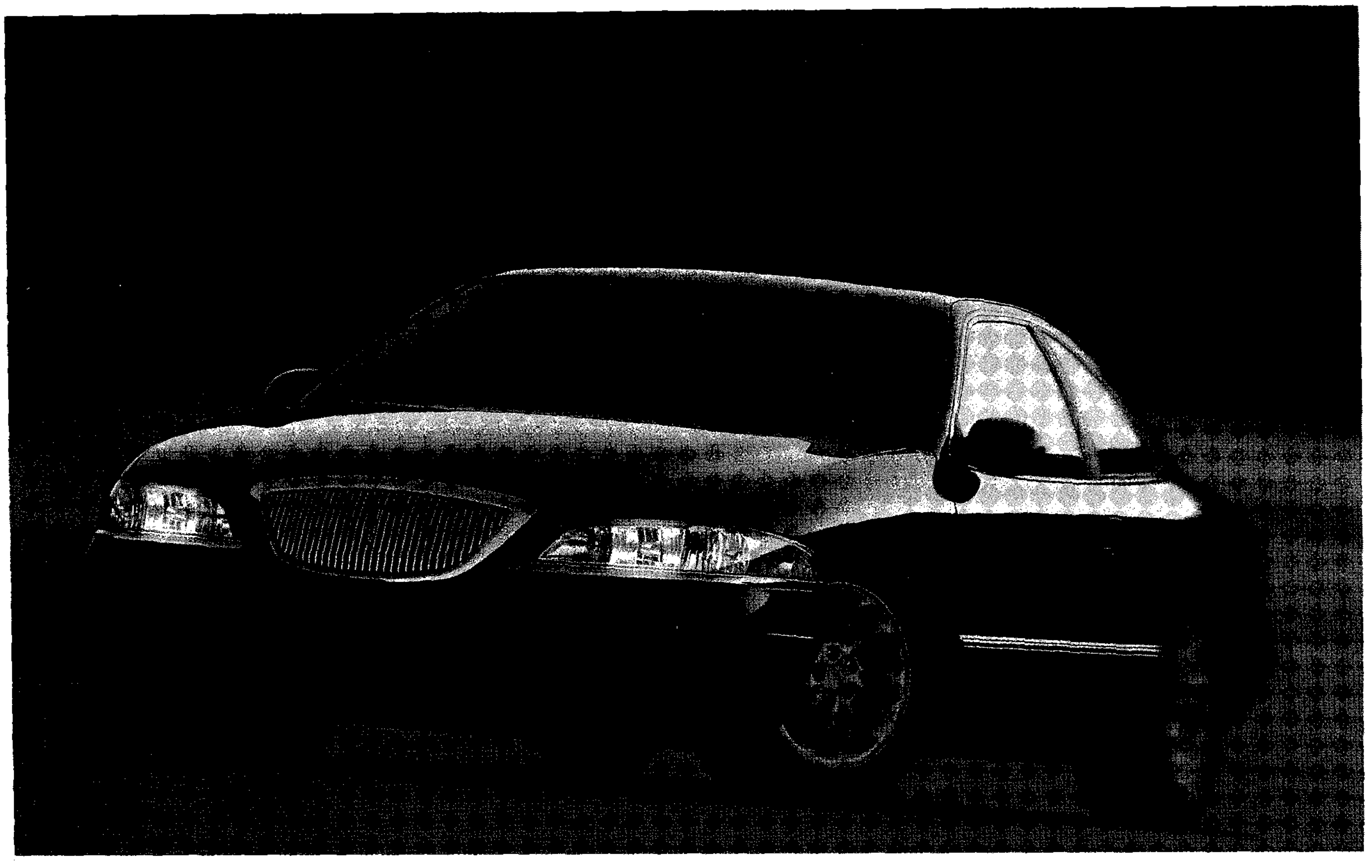
Speaking of hyenas, it seems that this one hyena goes up to a gorilla in the People's Zoo. Never saw a gorilla before, and—

"—you can have anything you want!" Entire cadres fall down when you get to that punch line, Master Clockmaker of Comic Timing! Your telling it never fails to inch up the annual rainfall while lowering the national blood pressure! Back to my shipwrecked sailor. One day, he—

That's nothing, Ladies and Germs! Boutros Boutros-Ghali—now, there's a wild and crazy guy. In fact, he's so crazy that— I told you never to interrupt! What is it?

Indefatigable Practitioner of the Perfect Squelch, your "Best of 'Hee Haw'" videocassette has arrived.

Aha! Well, then, Ardent Foes of the Lickspittle Parasite Ten-Per-Center Agents, back to work. You've been a wonderful audience. And, in closing, may I just say, here's champagne for my real friends, and real pain for my sham friends! (*Rim shot.*) ◆



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